

March 14, 2011

Dear Connecticut Legislators:

My name is Robert Emigh and I am an Associate Professor of English as a Second Language at Norwalk Community College in Norwalk, Connecticut. I am writing to strongly urge the legislature to pass the Governor's Bill 6390—the DREAM Act. I often ask fulltime students who are struggling with missing assignments or late essays, if they are working, thinking this would help me to understand their situation. I am truly astounded by the number of students who tell me they are working *fulltime, 40-hour work weeks in addition to being full time students*. They will tell me there is no other way to afford the out-of-state tuition, which is roughly three times that of an in-state student.

It is one thing if students choose this path of their own volition; it is an entirely different thing if students are forced into this almost untenable situation through no fault of their own. It is in your power to right this wrong. As a society, we are a beacon to those from other countries who see the United States as a country where each individual will rise, or fall, on his or her own merits. This is something I have also heard from my ESL students many times—it often the reason they immigrated to this country. It is for this reason that I have found previous failures to pass the DREAM Act so inexplicable. It seems to me that this right—to rise or fall solely dependent on the content of one's own character—is an almost inherent right that we bestow on all who abide by our laws and play by the rules. The DREAM Act student is the exception to this principle—a student who is discriminated and punished for something he or she had no control over. I urge you to redress this situation and pass the Governor's Bill 6390.

Sincerely,

Robert Emigh  
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