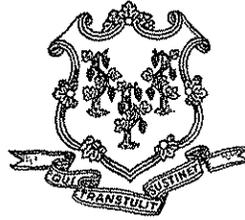


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Good Morning Senator Bye, Representative Willis and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. I am here to testify in support of H.B. 6390 AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION. This proposal would allow the children of undocumented immigrants to attend state institutions of higher education at the in-state tuition rate IF the children have attended school in Connecticut and have graduated from a Connecticut high school.

These children do not qualify for any financial aid. This proposal does NOT provide them with financial aid; it simply sets their tuition at the rate that applies to all other state residents. Its benefits to our state include strengthening the labor market by slowing the rate of loss of talented workers and increasing the number of taxpayers, thus reducing the overall burden on families. Students with degrees from public universities and colleges are more likely to build careers in Connecticut.

In 2007, the General Assembly approved a similar bill which was, unfortunately vetoed by the then governor. I have remained committed to passing legislation to make higher education more affordable for high-achieving young people who often have no memory of life anywhere but Connecticut and whose education has been in our schools.

Ultimately, the most compelling reason to expand opportunity for all Connecticut high school graduates is fairness. Children who were brought to the U.S. by their parents should not be penalized for something over which they had no control. Many of these students have lived in our state for virtually their entire lives; they are our neighbors and our children's friends and classmates. They are also a significant part of Connecticut's future.

Beyond the fairness and compassion argument, there is a pragmatic economic reason for Connecticut to pass this legislation: those with degrees from public universities and colleges are more likely to build careers in Connecticut. Connecticut has had an above average out-migration of young people (ages 18-34). It is widely accepted that university attendance in a particular state increases the likelihood that students will remain in that state upon graduation. However, the cost of attending Connecticut's public colleges and universities has been increasing dramatically.

Reducing costs naturally means that more young people have the opportunity to attend college and succeed. Terri Carbaugh, the Vice Chancellor of the California Community College system, stated that "The higher the number of degree-holders living in our state, the more likely we are to meet future workforce demands." She is correct; we must do all we can to create a workforce that is attractive to businesses. California is one of the states which already has a law similar to what is being proposed for Connecticut. These states are California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

College graduates generally pay much more in taxes than those without degrees and they are six times more likely to have a job. In addition, the jobs tend to be higher paying for the college educated, who are less likely to commit crimes or seek government assistance of any kind. This legislation will increase the number of future taxpayers, thus reducing the overall burden on families.

The failure of Connecticut to have uniform tuition for residents drives away some of the brightest students. Successful colleges are economic multipliers for communities, attracting federal research dollars and jobs with good pay. We would all gain if Connecticut's public universities had the recruiting tools necessary to compete with any college in the world.

The most common argument against the proposal is that, while it may help the economy in the future, its immediate costs are excessive. However, if this bill has any impact on the state budget at all, it is likely to be a positive one. Many of these students, who would be accepted into the public university system do not attend college because they cannot afford the additional \$10,000 for out-of-state tuition. The increase in enrollment could be of great financial benefit to the currently under enrolled Connecticut State University system.

Thank you for hearing this legislation of extraordinary importance.