

To the Members of the Higher Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Kenneth Reveiz, and I am a member of the organization CT Students for a DREAM. I am also an active member of the Democratic Town Committee in New Haven and a Key Leader in New Haven Rising. I have spent countless mornings and nights knocking on doors, registering voters, mobilizing volunteers, and getting out the vote.

I stand strongly and proudly in support of the following two bills: House Bill 6844 AN ACT CONCERNING IN-STATE TUITION ELIGIBILITY which would lower the in-state residency requirement for undocumented students from four years to 2 years. AND House Bill 6845 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION, part of which would open up access to some financial aid for undocumented students.

I support legislation that takes vital steps towards education equality by making higher education more accessible for undocumented students, including but not limited to: opening access to institutional and state financial aid to undocumented students; broadening the number of students eligible for in-state tuition; lowering the in-state residency requirement for undocumented students; and creating an alternative to FAFSA, one that allows undocumented students to get fair and equal access to financial aid.

My parents immigrated to the United States from Colombia in the late 1980s. Supported by their love and support and because of my hard work and persistence, I won a full scholarship to Yale University and graduated in 2012. I am an agent of change in my neighborhood, and am responsible for a huge boom of civic engagement in my city. I have translated a full-length book of poetry from French to English, and have educated hundreds of New Haven residents in everything from cooking to community-based policing to voting rights to art therapy. I have seen first hand how access to financial aid changed my life.

It is, without a shadow of a doubt, in the best economic and cultural interest of our great state to sign into law and graciously implement HB 6844 and HB 6845. Connecticut has garnered municipal and national attention for leading on the minimum wage, paid sick days, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. It behooves us to add college affordability – for all – to our impressive list of accomplishments. The bills in question are one more important footstep forward trailblazing the path that other states should follow. We will be proud to say “Connecticut is a leader in education equity for immigrant youth.”

When you invest in the education of someone who knows what it means to struggle, to persist, to work hard, to innovate, and to dream, they prove you right. They thank you. They return the favor two-fold. By allowing Connecticut’s youth to Afford to Dream, you do yourself and our state a great favor. I am sure of this, because I have invested in my family at CT Students for a DREAM. At C4D, in New Haven, and across the country, I have met countless immigrant youth who are brilliant, talented, passionate, generous, and hilarious. They deserve the same educational and economic opportunities that I had, and more. They can give back as much as I have given back, and more.

I thank the leadership of the CGA and the State for your very important work. I end my testimony in support of these bills, and with hope that Connecticut will continue to lead.

Thank you,  
Kenneth Reveiz