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**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN
BEFORE THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 26, 2015**

I appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 398, an Act Assisting Students Accepted Into the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program with the Cost of College. This bill would amend the general statutes to allow certain undocumented children, who have been accepted into the federal government's deferred action for childhood arrivals program, to receive state financial assistance for attending an institution of higher education in this state.

In 2011, the legislature passed a law that makes some undocumented students eligible for in-state tuition at the state's colleges and universities. Though this was an important first step, the high cost of a college education continues to pose a barrier to countless undocumented students. Without financial aid, college is simply unaffordable for many such students. As a result, those students are unable to obtain the kind of education they need to make important contributions to our state's economy and further the state's education equity goals.

Although federal law permits states to offer undocumented students certain forms of state-funded financial assistance, to do so states must first enact state laws authorizing students to seek and receive that aid. A number of states have availed themselves of that opportunity, including Texas, New Mexico, California, Illinois, Minnesota and Washington. Connecticut should follow these states' lead. Doing so will further the important goals the legislature previously embraced when it made undocumented students eligible for in-state tuition – namely, economic growth and educational equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this important proposal. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.