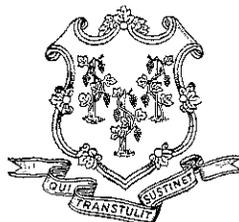


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Good Morning Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Willis and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. I am here to testify in support of **SB 398 AN ACT ASSISTING STUDENTS ACCEPTED INTO THE DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS PROGRAM WITH THE COST OF COLLEGE.**

In 2011 the Connecticut General Assembly passed PA 11-43 which allows students who are in the federal government's deferred action for childhood arrivals program (DACA) and met certain additional criteria to pay in-state tuition at our colleges. That legislation was compassionate, fair, and pragmatic. Allowing DACA students to qualify for the in-state tuition rate has assisted many students in their pursuit of higher education. Many others, however, are still unable to afford the costs of higher education without financial assistance.

SB 398 would allow these students access to certain forms of financial aid at our state colleges and universities including the grants that are funded by tuition set-aside. These grants are funded by money set aside from the tuition of all students; the DACA students' tuition provides some of the funding and it seems equitable that they should also benefit from the program.

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. Students who attain degrees from public universities and colleges in Connecticut are more likely to build careers in Connecticut. Connecticut has had a significant 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 which can adversely affect students' ability to further their education.

The provision of financial assistance would ensure that more young people will 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.

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 governor has two bills that address this matter as well. HB 6844, AN ACT CONCERNING IN-STATE TUITION ELIGIBILITY, changes the qualification criteria for in-state tuition from four years in Connecticut schools to two and SB 6845, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION, creates a scholarship program for these students that would be administered by New Haven Promise. I believe that these bills present an equivalent alternative to SB 398 and I would support either approach.

Thank you for attention to this important issue.