



**Connecticut Education
Association**

Governance

Shella Cohen, President
Jeff Leake, Vice President
Pat Jordan, Secretary
Thomas Nicholas, Treasurer
John Horrigan, NEA Director
Gary Peluchette, NEA Director

Executive Office

Mark Waxenberg
Executive Director

**Professional Practice, Policy &
Research**

Dr. Linette Branham, Director
Capitol Place, Suite 500
21 Oak Street
Hartford, CT 06106
860-525-5641 800-842-4316
Fax 860-725-6328

An affiliate of the
National Education Association

Testimony of

Ray Rossomando

Connecticut Education Association

Before the

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

**Re: SB398 An Act Assisting Students Accepted Into The Deferred Action For
Childhood Arrivals Program With The Cost Of College**

February 26, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Ray Rossomando, Legislative Coordinator for the Connecticut Education Association, representing 43,000 active and retired teachers across the state.

We testify today in strong support of SB398 An Act Assisting Students Accepted Into The Deferred Action For Childhood Arrivals Program With The Cost Of College. We commend Senator Looney for submitting this legislation and making it a priority this session.

SB398 builds on Connecticut's DREAM act by extending various tuition assistance programs to students accepted into the federal deferred action for childhood arrivals program. We believe that this bill will go a long way toward extending to undocumented students the same terms and conditions as other Connecticut students receive through increased access to financial aid at Connecticut universities and colleges.

Connecticut's competitive advantage had long been its educated workforce. However, Connecticut has seen too many of its college-bound graduates head for distant states, many of whom ultimately settle outside of our borders. At a time when the state's need for competitive graduates is at an all-time high, we should dismantling hurdles that diminish access to our public institutions of higher education. This bill is another step in the right direction.

As public school teachers, we recognize that students can be energized by their future aspirations. By providing equitable tuition assistance to a population of students who, most often by no fault of their own, attend our schools without legal immigration status, we make such dreams and aspirations more possible. This can only lead to a better Connecticut.

Thank you.