



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Testimony of Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director of
LPRAC before the Higher Education Committee

Thursday, March 12, 2015

1:30 PM in Room 1E of the LOB

In Support of HB6844 and HB 6845

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, and distinguished members of the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA); my name is Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). I am here to speak in support of the Governor's Bills HB6844 and HB6845.

We, at LPRAC, applaud the Governor for proposing to set aside \$150,000 in FY16 and \$300,000 in FY17 from the Governor's Scholarship program for a merit-based grant available to students that lack immigration status (Governor's Bill No. 6845). The Governor's office is currently working with New Haven Promise as the likely administrator of this merit-based grant program because of their track record of administering a similar grant program for New Haven students, including undocumented New Haven residents. This grant program will be available to undocumented students with Connecticut residency attending public institutions of higher education in Connecticut – again LPRAC supports this recommendation and urges the Higher Education to do so too.

LPRAC also supports the Governor's recommendation to reduce the requirements for in-state tuition rates from four years to two years of high school in Connecticut (i.e., Governor's Bill No. 6844) which based under Public Act 11-43, a person regardless of immigration status qualifies for in-state tuition if he or she (1) resides in Connecticut; (2) attended any educational institution in the state and completed at least four years of high school here; (3) graduated from a high school in Connecticut, or the equivalent; and (4) is registered as an entering student, or is currently a student at, UConn, a Connecticut State University, a community-technical college, or Charter Oak State College. Students without legal immigration status, who meet the above criteria, must file an affidavit with the college stating that they have applied to legalize their immigration status or will do so as soon as they are eligible to apply. Currently, such students who apply for student visas or lawful permanent resident status are subject to deportation under federal law. Thus, they are not eligible to apply to legalize their status unless federal law is amended to allow them to do so.

Extending in-state tuition status to people without legal immigration status who reside in Connecticut and meet certain criteria according to the Office of Fiscal Analysis of the Connecticut General Assembly is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the constituent units of higher education. The University of Connecticut and the Connecticut State University System have policies to adjust the ratio of in-state to out-of-state students and therefore can make charging in-state tuition to persons without legal immigration status who reside in Connecticut revenue neutral. The Regional Community-Technical Colleges currently have no such persons paying out-of-state tuition and therefore it is anticipated charging in-state tuition would result in no fiscal impact.