

# -YALE COLLEGE- DEMOCRATS

Testimony of Adam Michalowski  
Member, Yale College Democrats

February 24, 2016  
206 Elm Street Suite C32B  
New Haven, CT 06511

In favor: S.B. 147  
An Act Assisting Students without Legal Immigration Status with the Cost of College.

Dear Members of the Committee of Higher Education and Employment Advancement,

My name is Adam Michalowski and I am a Connecticut student writing to ask for your support of S.B. 147, an Act Assisting Students without Legal Immigration Status with the Cost of College, granting undocumented students access to financial aid at state universities and colleges on the same terms and conditions as other Connecticut students.

I'm sure you're familiar with the statistics that resoundingly support investing in the education of all students, including those of undocumented status, such as the \$55,000 increase in lifetime tax revenue that a college graduate contributes to the state, so I write instead with a personal appeal. As a recipient of the Pell Grant, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, and substantial aid from Yale, I can personally attest that institutional aid has changed the course of my life.

I am eligible for this aid and the opportunities it creates because of hard work and difficult decisions on my part. Among them was my decision to dedicate my time to school, my decision to turn down other opportunities that would have detracted from academics, and my decision focus almost entirely on getting into and paying for college. Undocumented students make these same difficult choices. They work just as hard. They contribute just as much to our country. But they are not eligible for the same types of institutional aid as students like me. Only one thing separates them from students like me, and it's the one decision neither of us get to make. Right now, my access to higher education and theirs is separated only by our differing citizenship status--the one factor that neither of us decided.

Undocumented students work just as hard as every other high schooler aspiring to college, make the same tough choices, and will make the same contributions to our state and our society. Their ability to attend college should not be determined by the only factor outside of their control, their citizenship status. This undermines the principles at the core of our American society, that every person who works hard gets an equal opportunity to succeed. I urge you as a student whose life has been changed institutional aid to please vote to allow all students who make these difficult choices and put in this hard work equal access to this life changing aid.

