

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 1800
Hartford, CT 06106

February 29, 2016

Dear Members of the Higher Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Aisha Folkes, I am from Franklin Township, NJ. I am currently a second year master's student in the UConn Higher Education and Student Affairs program. I stand in support of SB 147: AN ACT ASSISTING STUDENTS WITHOUT LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS WITH THE COST OF COLLEGE. This bill would equalize access to institutional financial aid at Connecticut public universities and colleges to all students regardless of immigration status.

In my master's program we focus on educational access and attainment for students from marginalized backgrounds. This issue is dealing with the most vulnerable student population. If college affordability is an issue for folks who are from this country, I recognize and empathize the extreme hardship for students without legal immigration status.

Many high school students who are undocumented have the dream, the intelligence, and the courage to attend and succeed in college. Low-income undocumented Connecticut students are barred from receiving the financial aid that they help to pay into that their classmates receive, this is simply unjust. They too deserve access to higher education, which will enrich their lives for the better. I currently work directly with students who will benefit from this funding. They are bright, brilliant, and their education matters! Navigating the university has been terribly difficult for these students because of their status. It is time we alleviate one of those hardships: financial.

Revenue from tuition must go back to funding undocumented and DACAmented students to pursue their higher education. It's simply a must. I thank you for reading this letter. I support SB 147 and hope the committee will vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,
Aisha Folkes