

Dear Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Chiedza Rodriguez, I am from West Hartford, CT. I am the Chief Executive Office of GARO Consulting llc., I am also an adjunct professor at Capital Community College and youth development professional. 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.

As an adjunct professor I have worked with amazing students that have been unable to complete their studies due to the interrelationship of financial need and their immigration status. They have been unable to reach the dream for which their parents brought them to this country to begin with, a quality education. I have worked with high school aged youth that become increasingly depressed and filled with despair at the reality that after high school they have no hope at higher education because their families have no financial recourse to pay, no matter how well they perform in school. They are isolated and unable to reach out for support for fear of retaliation, and deportation. These are young people that have such potential to make cutting-edge contributions to our society.

Supporting this bill will provide these students at least one avenue to mitigate the barriers they are facing. It allows them to access funds that the undocumented community already pays into. We cannot say as a society, sure we will take your money for tuition, but we will not allow you to access any aid that money creates. They have paid into this fund, they should have access to its support if they so should need it. It is only what is fair. We are talking about educating the young people that live here, that make up our society, our community.

Supporting students gaining access to aid, will benefit us all as a community and it will cost the taxpayers no money. There is no reason to say no to this ask.

I support SB 147 and hope the committee will vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,

*Chiedza Rodriguez*

Chiedza Rodriguez, CEO

GARO Consulting llc.

