



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

My name is Cinthia Perez, I am from New Haven, CT. I am the New Haven community organizer from C4D and social work student at Southern Connecticut State University. 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 undocumented student who has a brother who went from being a full time student and leave school for a semester due to financial aid barriers, I have seen the affect it has on him emotionally. As the older sister, he sacrificed his education for my own. Being two of us who could not obtain financial aid at our university has been hard. Each semester we see ourselves trying to find ways to pay around \$25,000 of our tuition. Working 2-3 jobs, going full time and do payment plans. My brother could of have graduated this year, but due being a part-time student it will take him more time. I want him to fulfill his dream career, a career that can help organizations and companies. But most important feel part of society.

On the other hand, as a social work student who interns in a high school. I have seen many high school seniors struggle to apply to college. I have seen honor students get into depression because they cannot afford college and fulfill their dreams. Our students whether undocumented or U.S. citizens deserve an education, they deserve to dream and most important deserve to succeed.

What is Institutional aid?

- *Connecticut must pass legislation that equalizes access to institutional financial aid for all students regardless of immigration status.*
- *Institutional Aid is funded by tuition revenue, not taxpayer money.*
- *Undocumented Students pay into and contribute to the institutional aid pool of funds but do not have access to this aid. Undocumented students should be eligible for institutional aid as all other students who pay tuition.*
- *There is nothing in the Connecticut statutes and regulations that prevents undocumented students from accessing this aid.*

Increases education equality

- *Low-income undocumented Connecticut students are barred from receiving the financial aid that they help to pay into that their classmates receive*
- *All students should have equal access to higher education, regardless of socioeconomic or immigration status.*
- *Ensuring equality of access to higher education is a matter of justice that ensures everyone who works hard has a fair shot of success*

It will help the CT Economy:

- *Extending financial aid to undocumented students is an investment in the future of Connecticut.*
- *A realistic path to college for these students will result in improved high school graduation rates and increased college matriculation.*
- *Expanding access to higher education will increase state revenue, in the short term through tuition from new students and in the long term as the higher incomes of these college graduates translate to increased taxes each year.*
- *Similar programs in other states have not displaced students or been a financial drain.*
- *Equalizing access to aid to undocumented students will cost taxpayers \$0.*

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

Thank you for your time,
Cinthia Perez, New Haven Community Organizer C4D