



Testimony of Dasia Moore
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In favor: S.B. 147

An Act An Act Assisting Students without Legal Status with the Cost of College

Madam Chairs and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

Many people testifying in favor of S.B. 147 are students. Some of us come from other regions of the country. Some of us were born and raised not far from the capitol here in Hartford. Some were born in the United States, and still others moved here at various stages of childhood and young adulthood. Yes, some of us are undocumented, while some are US citizens. Despite our differences in background, we all have at least two things in common. One, we chose to better our communities and ourselves by pursuing higher education. Second, we chose Connecticut as the place we would grow and learn.

However, despite our common choices, we do not have equal opportunities to pursue our goals. Undocumented students pay a higher price, both literally and figuratively, for the education they want and deserve as much as anyone else. For students without legal immigration status, options for financial aid are limited. Even though all students pay into tuition pools that fund institutional aid, only students with citizenship are allowed the benefits. At our state's public colleges and universities, undocumented students face higher tuition costs, and because of this inequality, also face more debt, more pressure to work outside of school, and restricted academic options.

Though our state is charging undocumented students more to enter society, undocumented students still give back to our communities and economy without restraint. Just like students with legal status, undocumented students go on to be innovative business owners, dedicated public servants, and conscientious residents of towns and cities throughout the state. Obtaining a degree is often the first step in giving back, and barriers to that first step should be lowered. Connecticut has already made important progress towards college accessibility and affordability for all students. The decision to allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition shows that this legislature recognizes that citizenship is not a prerequisite for being part of our state's community. Though this progress was astounding, the lack of access to financial aid of any kind still prohibits many undocumented residents from taking full advantage of our state's educational resources.

Undocumented students living and studying here have chosen Connecticut. It is time that Connecticut chooses undocumented students. Our state must choose to show that all students' dreams, work, potential, and futures are important. I hope that you pass S.B. 147, An Act Assisting Students without Legal Status with the Cost of College.