

SB 147

Financial aid Opportunity for Undocumented Students

My name is Doris Illescas, I am a student from Danbury High School from Danbury, CT. I am a member of the organization CT Students for a Dream. 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.

I am born in the United States of America but my parents are from Ecuador. I was the lucky one to be born here, but my siblings weren't. My sister went to college without the help of financial. My sister graduated on the 3rd of December 2015. Luckily, my sister had a husband who payed half of her studies and had parents who supported her to make her dreams come true. But not every undocumented student is fortunate to have parents and a spouse like my sister did. My sister worked in multiple jobs before she went to school. In high school she worked in a grocery store, as she moved to another city she worked in a accounting office. Where she started as a secretary and then learned how to do taxes and help actual clientes. My sister is on of those people who are very lucky and fortunate to have met people that gave her an opportunity to learn different skills with a high school diploma.

As I stated before, not every undocumented student is fortunate as my sister was. Other students probably struggled more than my sister did. SB147 and institutional aid will make things better for every undocumented students. These students will have the opportunity to attend better universities in the state of Connecticut rather than them going to a community college. Students will worry less about the tuition cost of the universities, if they had the opportunity to have financial aid. Financial aid for them would be life changing. They would make their dreams and goals come true. These students only want the same opportunity as documented students. I as a documented student believe that they should be able to receive financial aid in order to make all of our dreams come true. This is the country of the freedom, in where all should have the same opportunities in school and jobs. Not everyone in America comes from a wealthy family, where everything comes easy for them. Some families work hard in order to obtain the things that they have today in life.

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 are all other students who pay tuition. There is nothing in the Connecticut statutes and regulations that prevents undocumented students from accessing this aid. We are not asking for a hand-out, but for a hand up. We are not asking for special treatment, but only the opportunity to access institutional aid on the same level as other students.

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

Thank you for your time,
Doris Illescas