

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

My name is Dulcemaria Cortes-Sanchez; I am freshman students studying at Central Connecticut State University, an undocumented student from *New Haven*. 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 came to the U.S. at the age of three in 2001, and as of then I have been residing here in the U.S ever since. I was very fortunate that my parents chose the city of New Haven to settle in. In New Haven I began my early education at Prince and Welch Annex elementary school, which is now John C. Daniels middle school and from there I enrolled to Cooperative Arts and Humanities high school. As graduation time approached, I always knew I wanted to go to college, but knowing my family's financial stance I doubted my abilities to pursue a higher education. Ever since I was young, many times did I hear the quote of "dreaming has no cost" well I must say, I have a dream that has a cost, a very high cost, a dream that due to the lack of financial resources, it became jeopardized.

As I have a brother, a year older than me who is currently attending the University of Connecticut, whom is also undocumented, I did not want to put more pressure on my parent's pockets. Thankfully, with my parents support they didn't hesitate on pushing me to go to college, and have the wonderful opportunity to be enrolled at CCSU, majoring in Social Work. But I must admit that being an undocumented student in college is not easy, constantly do I feel pressured and a sort of guilt for putting more stress on my parents. My first semester in college I had the need to drop out of a class because I had to find a part time job, and with that money help my parents by purchasing books on my own. I began to worry more about being able to afford college, than the academics area, and the personal stress of responsibility to take care of my education and the financial stress began to hit me. This financial aid will help me be fully devoted to my vocation of a student. I can guarantee that the very minimum of financial support will make a drastic effect on my family, a family from a working class who lives day by day

I urge all to support this bill, to support my dream and the dream of my fellow peers. I ask that we are given the right to afford to dream. *We are not asking for special assistance, 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,
Dulcemaria Cortes Sanchez