

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

My name is Jose Diaz, and I live in New Britain. I'm currently a student in Central Connecticut State University. I am a member of the organization CT Students for a Dream, Manos Unidas, and United Action Connecticut. I'm here today 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'm originally from Mexico, and I came to the United States with my parents in hope of a better future. One of my personal goals was to do my best in school and be able to obtain a degree. Every time that I would think of giving up in school, I would think of my parents and the sacrifices that they had to make and I would remember the promise that I had made to myself and would not give up. All the hard work paid off when I graduated from New Britain High School with Honors.

However, when I wanted to go to college I was faced with the reality that I would not be able to afford it. I wasn't able to get any type of aid, and my dreams were beginning to vanish. After a long year, I was able to attend Capital Community College and obtain my Associates degree in Management. Even though I'm now in Central, I still face the financial challenge. There are other students that are in the same situation as me, and all they need is an opportunity. With the passage of this Bill, that opportunity will be given to these students and hope will not be lost.

Once again, I support SB 147 and I hope the committee will vote in favor of it.

Thank you for your time,

Jose E. Diaz