

FWDYale

Testimony of Mariana Rocha
Education Accessibility Ambassador, FWDYale

February 28, 2016
300 College Street,
NewHaven, CT 06511

In favor: S.B. 147
 An Act Assisting Students without Legal Immigration Status with the Cost
 of College.

To the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Higher Education and Employment
Advancement:

Extending financial aid to undocumented students is a necessary investment. Currently, only 60% of undocumented 18-24 year-olds have a high school diploma as opposed to 92% of U.S. born students. This is due largely to the fact that financial aid is minimal for undocumented students. Without the accessibility to go to college, many bright students drop out, leaving our state with lower numbers of educated professionals. The money we invest into undocumented students translates to an improved economy in Connecticut. . A college degree raises average lifetime tax by \$55,000. With more individuals making a higher living, tax revenue will increase, therefore boosting Connecticut's economy.

Connecticut has adopted a goal of educational equality, unfortunately, this is not the case. As of 2015, Connecticut's achievement gap is amongst the largest in the 50 states. Extending financial aid to undocumented students will institute diversity across college campuses, companies and even our government. With no regulations against financial aid for undocumented students, there is no reason for connecticut to withhold from making education more inclusive. These students bring an improved perspective to college campuses, leading to bigger awareness of immigration issues and policy in the United States.

Undocumented students deserve the chance to take on big careers, improve their family's economic education and give back to their new home. Help make this possible by extending financial aid to all.

Best,
Mariana Rocha

