

February 29, 2016

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

My name is Norma Merced and I live in Milford. I am a high school counselor in West Haven and 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.

Every year I work with capable, intelligent but undocumented students who may not be at the top of their class but would thrive in college. Through no fault of their own they are here in the United States and have been here most of their lives, and need to borrow to attend their local state university and have a credential for a profession .

SB 147 is not a gift, simply the ability to borrow perhaps a limited amount so college can be a possibility for not only our top undocumented students, but for any capable student that is highly likely to live their entire working life in the United States. Most are English-dominant, bilingual—like me, earnest young people who would be a great asset to our workforce, and are not asking for a handout.

I vote, and I support SB 147 and hope the committee will do what is right and vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,

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