

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

My name is Renato Muguerza and I am a student at the University of Connecticut at Storrs and a proud resident of both Willimantic, Connecticut and Cheshire, Connecticut. 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 support this bill because as a documented permanent resident of the United States, I have experienced firsthand the backwardness of our immigration system, and I recognize the extreme injustices that my undocumented peers have to face. The privileges that documented immigrants and U.S-born citizens experience over undocumented people have no moral or logical ground whatsoever. That is to say, I benefit from access to financial aid for college simply because my family faced fortunate circumstances when migrating here. Additionally, U.S-born citizens and permanent residents are never asked to explain our humanity and our need for education as a basic human right. Our children will never have to feel as though they need to achieve perfect grades in order to justify their existence. So I ask you, why do we look at immigrants and expect them to settle for being second class citizens?

Connecticut used to be a leader in acknowledging education as a human right and not just a luxury for its wealthy residents. Unfortunately, we are far behind on the issue of allowing undocumented students to apply to receive aid from the pool of tuition dollars which they are paying into. Examples from other states show us that this can and will happen, the only question is which side of history are we going to be standing on when we look back at the progress we as a society have made. SB 147 is an opportunity for us to stand on the side of equity and justice, and I strongly urge the committee to vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,
Renato Muguerza