

SENATOR MARTIN M. LOONEY
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Eleventh District
New Haven, Hamden & North Haven
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State of Connecticut
SENATE

State Capitol
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591
132 Fort Hale Road
New Haven, Connecticut 06512
Home: 203-468-8829
Capitol: 860-240-8600
Toll-free: 1-800-842-1420
www.SenatorLooney.cga.ct.gov

Good Morning Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Willis and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. I am here to testify in support of SB 147 AN ACT ASSISTING STUDENTS WITHOUT LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS WITH THE COST OF COLLEGE.

In 2011 the Connecticut General Assembly passed PA 11-43 which allows certain undocumented students who meet specific criteria to pay in-state tuition at our colleges. That legislation was compassionate, fair, and pragmatic. Allowing these students to qualify for the in-state tuition rate has assisted many students in their pursuit of higher education. Many others, however, are still unable to afford the costs of higher education without financial assistance.

Last year, PA 15-82 reduced from four years to two, the length of high school education that certain students must complete in Connecticut to receive in-state tuition benefits at the state's public higher education institutions. SB 147 would represent the next step along this path towards equity; it would allow these students access to the forms of financial aid at our state colleges and universities that are funded by tuition payments. This aid is funded by money set aside from the tuition of all students; the undocumented immigrant students' tuition provides some of the funding and it seems equitable that they should also benefit from the program.

Many of these students have lived in our state for virtually their entire lives; they are our neighbors and our children's friends and classmates. They are also a significant part of Connecticut's future. Students who attain degrees from public universities and colleges in

Connecticut are more likely to build careers in Connecticut. Connecticut has had a significant out-migration of young people (ages 18-34). It is widely accepted that university attendance in a particular state increases the likelihood that students will remain in that state upon graduation. However, the cost of attending Connecticut's public colleges and universities has been increasing dramatically which can adversely affect students' ability to further their education.

The provision of financial assistance would ensure that more young people will have the opportunity to attend college and succeed. Terri Carbaugh, the Vice Chancellor of the California Community College system, stated that "The higher the number of degree-holders living in our state, the more likely we are to meet future workforce demands." She is correct; we must do all we can to create a workforce that is attractive to businesses. California is one of the states which already has a law similar to what is being proposed for Connecticut.

College graduates generally pay much more in taxes than those without degrees and they are six times more likely to have a job. In addition, the jobs tend to be higher paying for the college educated, who are less likely to commit crimes or to seek government assistance of any kind. This legislation will increase the number of future taxpayers, and help to supply the highly skilled educated workforce essential if Connecticut is to successfully compete in the demanding global economy of the future.

Thank you for attention to this important issue