

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

My name is Stephanie Marquez, I am from Hartford but just recently moved to Willimantic. I am a part of Connecticut Students for a Dream and 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 was undocumented until this past year so this issue is very important to me. I now stand with Connecticut Students for a Dream as an ally because I know how hard it is to afford college while being undocumented. I was working three jobs and going to school part time to make sure that I could afford my classes but never stop going to school. As a student, I was contributing money to the school and I was never able to benefit from it. I have many friends that are going through the same thing I did and they are all deserving of this help. Not because of their academic performance but because they are paying into this pool of money and the right thing is for them to at least have access to it. I strongly believe that if SB 147 was passed, they would be able to focus more on school and take on more classes. This way they finish school in timely manner and contribute to the economy sooner, which is what most people seem to be concerned about. This is not tax payer money; it is the students' own money so that argument is no longer valid. All students should have EQUAL access to higher education regardless of socioeconomic or immigration status.

Why allow students to have a K-12 education but not higher education. If students are not able to go to school, where will they go? I believe in the long run, if students have higher education, the state will greatly benefit from it. There is nothing in the Connecticut statutes and regulations that prevents undocumented students from accessing this aid. Similar programs in other states have not displaced students or been a financial drain. Again, I would like to reiterate that equalizing access to aid to undocumented students will cost taxpayers \$0.

I support SB 147 and hope the committee will vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,

Stephanie Marquez

*Regional Organizer  
Connecticut Students for a Dream*