

Yenimar Cortes

Higher Education Committee

SB 147 Testimony

3/1/16

Dear Members of the Higher Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Yenimar Cortes, I am a senior at Hill Regional Career high school from New Haven. I am a member of the organization CT students for a DREAM. Today, 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 aid at connecticut public universities and colleges to all students in connecticut regardless of immigration status. Fifteenth years ago, at the age of two I embarked on my journey towards higher education. I left Mexico by the hands of my desperate mother who desired a better future for her daughters. I remember her telling me that America is the place where all my dreams will become a reality. Today, I am filled with pride to say that she was right because in four months I will become a graduate from the class of 2016, but this is not the end for me. Just like many college has always been the bigger picture that I wish to fulfill. College is essential to make my dream of becoming a physician to help those most vulnerable a reality. So when I realize that because of my legal immigration status I did not qualify for institutional aid, I was filled with anguish and frustration. This anguish and frustration inside of me was so great that one day I just sat in my room looking through all my college acceptance letters crying because I realized that a huge barrier was built for me. After this terrible experience, I decided to purge all that anguish and frustration out and fight for my

education. This is why I stand here asking you to help make education equal for every student. Undocumented students contribute and pay to the institutional aid pool funds but are unfairly denied to receive any. No human being should be allowed to feel the kind of anguish and frustration that I felt. There is no barrier that does not allow Connecticut statutes and regulations from giving this aid to undocumented students. We are asking for nothing else but equality for every student. This act will not only help my dreams but the dreams of hundreds of students in Connecticut. I thank you deeply for your time and hope that the committee will vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,

Yenimar Cortes