



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION



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Alok Bhatt

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, and esteemed members of the Higher Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Alok Bhatt, Legislative Analyst for the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (APAAC).

In assisting all students, regardless of immigration status or any aspect of identity, with the extensive costs of higher education, APAAC writes in strong support of SB 147: An Act Assisting Students without Legal Immigration Status with the Cost of College.

In APAAC's years of supporting this and similar initiatives, our staff has engaged with dynamic, brilliant young individuals who juggle two-to-three jobs while attending local colleges and universities. The question of whether they will be able to attend school the following semester constantly lingers. Without Social Security numbers, they could not apply for federal loans. Many scholarship programs discriminate against undocumented students.

APAAC believes no student should be denied equal access to higher education due to economic restraints. Furthermore, all students who pay into an institution's set-aside funds must have need-based access to those funds. Restrictions based on immigration status constitute blatant discrimination. The State of Connecticut should not be in the business of deterring ambitious youth from fulfilling their dreams of going to college.

During the 2015 Identifying the Missing Power of Asian Americans in Connecticut (IMPAACT) conference at the University of Connecticut, APAAC staff interacted with undocumented students who traced their origins to Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and other world regions. This issue impacts student whose families came from all around the globe to provide them an opportunity to achieve something great. APAAC recommends the General Assembly pass this law and allow its students to flourish and focus on their education.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alok Bhatt  
*Legislative Analyst, APAAC*

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