

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

My name is *Luis Ortega*, I am from New Haven. I am *a member of the organization Connecticut Students for a Dream*.

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.

As a member of C4D and a U.S citizen, I have seen many of my friends I have grown up who are undocumented facing difficult challenges struggling to pay for college. While others are eligible for grants, loans and financial aid, higher education remains out of reach for many undocumented students. I met a boy whose parents brought him from Guatemala to the United States to have the opportunity to get a higher education. He is a junior and a high honor student at Wilbur Cross High School. His friends are eligible for grants and get financial aid to use for their dream school in Connecticut. His positive attitude has inspired me to support the undocumented students. The senate bill 147 would help my friend and all undocumented students to apply for and receive the same institutional aid currently available to all in-state students who are U.S. citizens.

Connecticut must pass legislation that equalizes access to institutional financial aid for all students regardless of immigration status. Undocumented Students pay into and contribute to the institutional aid pool of funds but do not have access to this aid. Let us give Connecticut Students access to real academic opportunity and achievement, in order to build a stronger state economy and society. To earn better livings, these undocumented students need a real chance to access higher education. A real chance means access to institutional financial aid. Ensuring higher education access for all is a new deal for equalizing opportunity and enabling hopes and dreams. I support SB 147 and hope the committee will vote favorably on SB 147.

Thank you for your time,

*Luis Ortega*