

Shanique Reid  
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
Public Testimony 3/1/2016  
In Favor: SB 147 Institutional Financial Aid for Undocumented Students

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

My name is Shanique Reid, I am from Hartford and is currently an intern at Planned Parenthood learning how to grow as a community organizer. Everyday I would meet different patients and hear their stories of how Planned Parenthood saved their life and was one of the few places that they felt safe and secure. It was one of the few institutions that offered genuine support and help no matter your economic status, race, religion, sexuality, disability or citizenship status.

Now back when I was Junior at the Classical Magnet School in Hartford, the teachers, guidance counselors and principals would drill into the students the importance of gaining a higher education; that it was essential to obtain a four year degree in the country unless the job opportunities would increase in hard labor but decrease in wage. At the time, I aspired to be a fashion designer. My grandmother never allowed my mother to attend school in Jamaica and therefore made her take up a trade as a seamstress, a skill my mother hated but I adored and studied. My best friend on the other hand, wanted to have a career in international business as she is fluent in four languages, she is Brazilian so she is fluent in Portuguese, and learned how to speak Spanish, Albanian, and English over the years that she has lived in the States. As it approached time to apply for colleges and look for scholarships, she came to me heartbroken and depressed. The guidance counselor told her to not even bother applying for college as there was no way she could afford it and she couldn't even apply for scholarships because the ones that she qualified for required students to be U.S. citizens. How could education in this country be projected as an essential path of life yet treated as a luxury for those whose who only fit the criteria?

As a junior at the University of Hartford, I am well aware of the expenses and stress of higher education but the opportunity has risen where I can use my privilege as a citizen and advocate for the those who are not but deserve the opportunity to chase the American Dream, of happiness and success which presents itself different for each person. We are all going to be in debt regardless, but college becomes more accessible when you have the option to have that debt or not.

There are no bad outcomes of equalizing access to institutional aid to undocumented students there are only benefits, as these students are part of the future of Connecticut and will only allow us to grow and be an example for other States.

Once again, My name is Shanique Reid, an intern at Planned Parenthood, and the best friend of an undocumented student who needs institutional aid. I am in definite support of SB 147 and I urge the committee to please vote in favor of it. Thank you for your time..