



Testimony of
Ray Rossomando
Connecticut Education Association

Before the
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Re: HB 7000: An Act Equalizing Access To Student-Generated Financial Aid

February 8, 2017

Connecticut Education Association

Governance

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Good afternoon Senator Beth Bye, Senator Art Linares, Representative Gregory Haddad and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Ray Rossomando, Research Specialist for the Connecticut Education Association, representing 43,000 active and retired teachers across the state.

We testify today in strong support of HB 7000 An Act Equalizing Access To Student-Generated Financial Aid.

HB 7000 builds on Connecticut's DREAM act by extending various tuition assistance programs to students accepted into the federal deferred action for childhood arrivals program. We believe that this bill will go a long way toward extending to undocumented students the same terms and conditions as other Connecticut students receive through increased access to financial aid at Connecticut universities and colleges.

Connecticut's competitive advantage had long been its educated workforce. However, Connecticut has seen too many of its college-bound graduates head for distant states, many of whom ultimately settle outside of our borders. At a time when the state's need for competitive graduates is at an all-time high, we should dismantle hurdles that diminish access to our public institutions of higher education. This bill is another step in the right direction.

As public school teachers, we recognize that students can be energized by their future aspirations. By providing equitable tuition assistance to a population of students who, most often by no fault of their own, attend our schools without legal immigration status, we make such dreams and aspirations more possible. This can only lead to a better Connecticut.

Thank you.