

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

My name is Joseline Tlacomulco, I am currently attending college at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT and I am an undocumented student. I am also an organizer for CT Students for a Dream and I stand in support of HB7000: AN ACT EQUALIZING ACCESS TO STUDENT GENERATED FINANCIAL AID and SB17: AN ACT ASSISTING STUDENTS WITHOUT LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS WITH THE COST OF COLLEGE.

I migrated to this country from Mexico when I was 8 months and grew up in New Haven ever since. I attended New Haven Public Schools from grades K-12 and within those years, never did I know what or how my undocumented status would affect me until I started applying for college, senior year of high school. I applied to college as a Music Education major due to the 8 years of playing the clarinet and getting involved in amazing music programs in New Haven. I was able to apply for music scholarships to attend UCONN and although I still had to pay out of pocket freshman year (approx. \$2,000 each semester) I was luckily able to attend. However, end of freshman year I noticed Music Education was not for me. I ended up switching to Political Science and Human Rights and am currently enjoying it 10x more.

Switching majors was a huge barrier financially. By switching majors, I lost my music scholarship that the Music Department had given me. That scholarship was worth \$5,000. But I knew that if I stayed in that major, I would've been miserable and my grades would've been worse. So I took the risk and switched anyways. First semester sophomore year, I had to pay \$4,000 out of pocket. That was a ridiculous amount for my parents as both my mom and dad work two jobs. When I would go back home, my mom's fridge would be half empty half full. Keep in mind, I have two little brothers.

Low income families always struggle. I know my parents do. Having the access to higher education is much more valuable especially with what's going on with regards to Trump and his policies being a danger to me and my family. My future has always been a blur even with DACA. But now, it's filled with black and gray clouds all around.

I demand that HB7000 and SB17 passes committee.

Thank you for your time,
Joseline Tlacomulco