



21 February 2018
Connecticut General Assembly
Higher Education and Employment Committee
Testimony in SUPPORT OF House Bill 5031:
An Act Equalizing Access to Student Generated Financial Aid

Dear Senator Bye, Senator Linares, Representative Haddad, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Committee:

My name is Alok Bhatt. I am Community Defense Coordinator for the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance (CIRA), a statewide grassroots coalition of diverse organizational partners convened to advance justice for immigrants and people of color in Connecticut.

I write today, as I have for the past four years, to signify CIRA's emphatic support for a proposal before your committee to enable access to institutional aid for undocumented students. I need not speak at length regarding the merits of this proposal, as our partners at Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D) have done progressively excellent work in advocating for justice in higher education policy before this committee and the entire Connecticut General Assembly.

Undocumented students in Connecticut presently face arbitrary and discriminatory economic barriers to higher education. This systemic prejudice must end this year. Undocumented students subsidize the education for students in need, yet lack access to such assistance, solely due to their immigration status. The absurdity and injustice of this situation seems clear, yet year after year, the Connecticut General Assembly has failed to pass a deeply meaningful and technically simple policy to equalize economic access to higher education.

Let us not repeat the mistakes of the past four years. The State of Connecticut must, with the full support of this committee, open access to institutional aid for undocumented students.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alok Bhatt
Community Defense Coordinator, Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance (CIRA)