



CONTRIBUTING TO A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD

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

My name is James Foran, I am from East Hartford where I also work as a School Counselor at Connecticut River Academy. I stand in support of HB5031. This bill will equalize access to student-generated, institutional aid in CT public colleges and Universities for all CT's students regardless of immigration status.

I am personally invested in this bill due to the huge impact it will have for several great students graduating from my school this year as well as in years to come. I would like to share the words of one of my students with you:

Many criticize undocumented immigrants for coming to the United States illegally. Though, often times the case of, following the American Dream is the only option. You see I came from a small country called Guyana, where education, especially for women, was far from ideal. My mother only finished primary school to become a housewife and my father left high school to farm. My family understood this and wanted better for me. So at the age of three, I moved to Connecticut with the idea in mind that I would be successful.

Excelling at school was a huge part of my home life. I remember not long after making my move, I sat on the floor and for hours stared at the alphabet poster on my wall. It was my duty to practice my handwriting so that I'd be in tip-top shape when I started Kindergarten. I had to maintain grades that exhibited hard work and demonstration. I carried this work ethic into my high school years where I continued to display A's. This hard work was continued with one goal in mind, excelling at college. However, during my Junior year of high school, I became aware that as a result of my immigration status, the country I spent almost my entire life in, would not be assisting me in paying for tuition. Despite searching through hundreds of scholarships, (many of which I was ineligible for because of my status), I still would not have enough money to pay my way through college. Even if the members of my family all pooled their money together, college was out of my reach. As I graduate high school this June, while a majority of my classmates are preparing to further their education, I have no choice but to find work elsewhere. Had I been offered aid, my dreams to attend college would have been easy to achieve. The one thing I worked so long for has suddenly become impossible.

It is unfair to punish undocumented students who simply want a good education that the United States provides, especially when the case for many is that they were brought as a young child with no understanding that they were breaking the law. It is the responsibility of government officials to make it possible for everyone to have an equal opportunity for higher education.

In working with this young lady it infuriates me that she and students like her not only have to find a



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way to pay the astronomical cost of college out of pocket, but that they also have to pay a significant amount into a pool of money that they are ineligible to receive from, that will go to their much more privileged peers. I can tell you from experience that this particular student is as deserving of a college education as any student that I have had the pleasure of working with. By passing this bill you will be making a significant difference in the possibility that a student like mine has access to college. She is not asking for extra money, only for equal access to the pool of money that she is paying into. At the Connecticut River Academy our mission is to “contribute to a just and sustainable world.” I pair this mission with a quote from one of the most inspirational people in my life, Rev. Edward McLean, who used to preach that “when in doubt, do the loving thing.” I hope that you will use your power to do the loving thing and correct this injustice so that our most outstanding students can contribute towards a sustainable world.

I strongly support HB5031 and hope your committee will vote favorably. Thank you for your time. Please feel free to contact me for more information at jforan@ctriveracademy.org or 860-310-2857.

James Foran
School Counselor