

Ana B Jimenez
219 S 10th Street
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RE: HB 2643

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Ana Jimenez and I am a 25 year old young professional living in the great state of Kansas. I am a recent graduate from Fort Hays State University where I earned my bachelor's degree in Sociology and Political Sciences. I am now on my first year as a graduate student at the University of Kansas enrolled in the Public Administration program. I am also a DACA recipient and a DREAMer.

At the age of 10, my parents made the difficult decision to leave everything behind and immigrated to the United States of America in August of 2003. We left our home country of Mexico only with the clothes we had on our backs and the hopes of a better future. All my parents ever wanted is a better future for myself and my two younger sisters. Although I always knew I was undocumented, I was naive and did not understand what that meant for me until I was a senior in High School. It was during my senior year in high school when all my classmates were applying for scholarships and universities when I came to the realization of what it meant to be an undocumented person living in America. I have always been an outstanding student and received good grades as my parents have always expressed the importance of education; but my grades and good moral character did not mean much to the universities and scholarships that denied me for not having a social security number. My dreams and goals were crumbling down. I took this news very personal and began to become depressed and began to question my value as a human being.

My parents are fighters and I have learned from them to overcome any obstacles that come my way. I was able to enroll in Kansas City Community College and received an Associate's degree all while working two jobs to pay for my education. After receiving my Associate's degree, I began to question if it was all worth it. I was not able to get a job and work on the field that I wanted to. It was always my dream to work in the nonprofit sector and help the needy; it was my way to pay it forward to my community. On June, 2012, President Obama announced the program Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). I can remember that day as if it was yesterday; I cried all day in disbelief. I was finally going to be able to live out my dreams! I immediately saved money and applied for DACA. This was my way coming out of the shadows and finally being treated as any other friend of mine. I got my driver's license and social security card. I immediately started applying for jobs and enrolled at Fort Hays State University. Soon

after I began working at a great nonprofit organization in Kansas City and volunteering for other nonprofit organizations in the area. I graduated from FHSU in May of 2016. I felt as though all the sacrifices that my family made and all the tears were worth it. I felt fully realized - I was living the American Dream and giving back to my community.

On September 5th, 2017, DACA was rescinded by Attorney General Jeff Session. I have been living in fear and uncertainty most of life. However, education has been a huge motivator in my life. I was always told as a child that with education all my dreams would become true and all doors would open for me. Now, my own state is trying to strip me of the possibility of obtaining a higher education by repealing in-state tuition. I have had to work up to three jobs to pay for my education with no assistance from the government as students like myself are barred from. As a graduate student at the University of Kansas, I pay \$2,000 for one class (3 credit hours). It is going to take me 5 years to complete my education as I cannot afford to pay for more classes. If bill HB 2643 passes, I would have close to zero chances of finishing my graduate degree due to costs. As DREAMers, we are currently experiencing one of the biggest fights of our lives to be allowed remain in this country. It is unfair to also have to fight for something so basic as an education. The state of Kansas is only to lose the valuable contributions of great students if bill HB 2643 were to pass, and I cannot let that happen. This proposed bill does absolutely nothing to increase funds for the Kansas foster child educational system and it is immoral to take away one child's education to give to another. This bill is simply an attack to our communities and if passed, the state of Kansas stands to suffer the consequences.

I mentioned in the first paragraph that I am a DREAMer, but most importantly I am a human being and a proud contributor to our society. It is difficult for me to understand that my home state that I love, does not believe that I am worthy of one of the most basic human rights that is education. I am not a burden to the American people as I am American. I am deeply grateful for all the opportunities that have been provided to me up to this point and I am certain that I would not be where I am today if it were not for my education. There is no doubt in my mind that without the privilege of in-state tuition, my life would be completely different. I am sure my story sounds all too familiar to many of you, but this is the hard reality that many students like myself live. I ask that you please take into consideration the struggles that undocumented students must experience to obtain an education but also the contributions that students like me bring to the state of Kansas through our education. For many education is something that is taken for granted, but for students like me, it is something we value. I believe that we deserve that opportunity. I am only asking you for an opportunity to success.

Sincerely,

Ana Jimenez
