

My name is Pat Cooper. I taught English, French, Spanish and ESL in Kansas schools for 39 years. During that time I had many hard working, smart, and motivated students who had been brought here illegally as small children. I am here to speak in their behalf and ask you to continue allowing them to pay in-state tuition at the universities and colleges in Kansas. I am opposed to HB 2643 that would deny them the opportunity to pay as legal residents.

I want to tell you about one family that illustrates why I feel this tuition break is so important. I had the 3 Cortes children in my Jr. High classes. They had lived in poverty in Mexico, in a family that often had to choose between shoes and food. Their parents brought them to Kansas when they were 6 months, 2, and 3 years old. So by the time I had them they spoke English like natives. They were A students and went on to graduate high school in the top of their classes.

By that time they had been residents of Kansas at least 15 years. They all took advantage of being able to pay in-state tuition, first at JCCC and later at MidAmerica Nazarene University. Susanna now works for a school district, Dalia is an office manager, and Victor has his own business. All have registered as DACA students and all pay taxes.

They have all told me that without the ability to pay in-state tuition they probably would not have been able to afford college.

They have lived in Kansas now for over 20 years and are contributing to our society, both financially and socially.

As a teacher I know the importance of education. That and hard work are the answers to most of the problems our society faces. To deny kids like the Cortes family the ability to afford college and achieve their full potential just doesn't make sense to me.

We not only hurt them but also our community.

Please continue to allow them to be able to pay in-state tuition and do not support HB 2643.