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**Testimony in Opposition to HB 2643**  
**House Budget Committee on Higher Education**

Chairperson Jones and Members of the House Budget Committee on Higher Education:

I want to express my strong opposition to HB 2643. The bill, which attempts to provide tuition assistance for eligible students in the foster care system, appears to do so at the expense of undocumented immigrants. The bill specifically repeals statutory provisions of KSA 76-731a, which has provided resident tuition status for certain undocumented immigrants since 2004. This is just the latest in a series of attempts to repeal these provisions in recent years. And just like those previous attempts, this attempt should also fail. Given the current concerns of DACA recipients and the painful uncertainties they face, we should be working harder to support innocent undocumented immigrants, DACA recipients and Dreamers alike, not putting their futures in even more jeopardy. The enactment of KSA 76-731a in 2004 was a shining moment in the history of this Legislature and should continue to be celebrated, not repealed.

I am particularly frustrated and saddened by the notion of the false choice that this bill suggests: that for someone to “win” (innocent young people in the foster care system) others must “lose” (innocent undocumented immigrants). This bill appears to demand that tuition assistance for foster care recipients contemplated by this bill be funded on the backs of Dreamers. Such a choice is NOT necessary. Both groups of deserving students can win if this Legislature finds the will to support both groups, along with other deserving groups.

A few short years ago, a member of the Kansas House of Representatives was roundly criticized for comparing undocumented immigrants to feral pigs and suggesting the eradication of undocumented immigrants in a fashion similar to the methods used for the feral pigs: shooting them from helicopters. The bias in this bill, while not so obviously blatant on its face, is not far removed from the notions contained in the former Representative’s comments. Denying rights to those already facing an uncertain future is not only blatant discrimination; it is also mean-spirited and cruel.

Please reject this bill and the absolute bias it displays to innocent undocumented immigrants in this state.

Sincerely,

Representative Louis Ruiz  
Kansas House of Representatives, District 31