

Committee on Higher Education Budget
300 SW 10th St.
Topeka, Kansas 66612

On behalf of the students of the University of Kansas, my administration and myself rise in strong opposition of H.B. 2643. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of those who do not have a voice or are too afraid of retribution if they were to speak on this issue. The passage of this bill will be detrimental for our college community and would end the “American Dream” for many our students as well as students attending various Kansas Board of Regents Institutions. Student Senate stands with the “Dreamers” as well as foster children who attend our university, but we do not believe it is just for both groups to be pitted against each other in the attempt to foster a wedge issue.

In November of 2016, KU Student Senate passed Resolution 2017-308 imploring the University of Kansas to protect the undocumented members of its society, which I co-authored along with members of the previous administration. We continue to believe that “as an institution, the measure of our commitment to diversity and belonging is not a matter of words or conversations, but rather the concrete policies put in place; addressing the plight of undocumented students at KU is a critical opportunity to demonstrate our bold aspirations for inclusion.”

The University of Kansas has an undocumented student community and provides little institutional support for these students, for they have limited choices in regard to financial aid. These students are not eligible to apply for grants and the majority of them are paying for college out of pocket. The implementation of this bill would force these individuals into the shadows when they know no other country than the United States. Kansas is their home and all they know. This community could have chosen to remain in the dark, but they chose to try to be contributing members of society. These students seek education and are bettering our state of Kansas.

As the US Federal Government continues to seek reform to our broken immigration system, we must not act and pass a law that is fundamentally flawed or may become nullified in the near future. Our federal immigration system may be broken, but by no means does that mean the state of Kansas must enact a broken state law to accompany it. We respectfully ask that you take the voices of the students into account when making your decision and thank you for your time.

Best Regards,

Mady Womack
The University of Kansas Student Body President