

February 17, 2018

To: Chairmen Rep. Kevin Jones and the House Higher Education Budget Committee
From: Diosselyn Tot, Kansas Resident and Community Organizer
Re: Opposition of House Bill 2643

Thank you for time to speak to you this afternoon. My name is Diosselyn Tot. I am a Kansas resident and also, an immigrant, a permanent resident, tax paying citizen, and a community organizer.

I work at El Centro, A non-profit organization that seeks, as their mission, to strengthen communities and improve lives of Latinos and others through educational, social, and economic opportunities.

I am honored to work for and represent El Centro today in opposition of House Bill 2643. As our mission states, through educational opportunities we seek to strengthen and improve our community. If passed, this bill limits us to strengthen our communities, as it prevents our young people the opportunity to obtain their education.

I am not a dreamer, though we respect and stand with them, but I obtained a U-VISA never the less as I've stated before I am an immigrant. An immigrant that was brought here at a young age, followed the rules, did my best in school, and graduated in 2017 from KU. However, this was not an easy road. Along the way there were many obstacles towards obtaining my education, just like the one this bill puts in place for many other young people if passed.

As a 17 year old, the educational system did its best to keep me from my full potential, I had to bear through all the redundant questions, hours of being on the phone, and ultimately fighting what I had rightfully earn, a scholarship. Just because I was not a resident, yet, they wanted to strip what could successfully get me to college. You see the obstacles in place not only affect our undocumented students, it has ripple effects towards the entire community.

As a 17 year old, I maintained my overachieving status at school but my home was broken due to someone deciding that they had the right to hurt my family and myself because of who we were, because of how we looked. I am here to tell you, that I persevere. I kept it together because I know knowledge was valuable, I knew my education was worth it and I fought to not fall through the cracks.

Without in-state tuition, though, I could have never made it. Why is this so important? Because on top of all the NO's I was already getting, another bill could had broken me and made me give up on my dream. A dream of a 17 year old to get her bachelors, follow by her masters, and hopefully one day her doctorate. Because finances were already an issue, to make that financial limitation even bigger could have been the end of my dream, and I would not be standing in front of you all today.

We all have a *dream*, and some of us just have a dream to be able to go to school and on top of that be able to have *access* to school. We should not be choosing who gets to go to school, what groups deserves it more, when there is plenty of opportunities in Kansas for all! There is not one human being more deserving than another, the way I see it, our history shows that

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Immigrants travel here to be able to obtain that freedom. To finally break free from the oppression they face. So why are we going back in time, why do we want to oppress people?

Thank you for listening to my story, please oppose HB2643.

We are open to any follow up questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Diosselyn Tot, B.A.

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