

February 23rd, 2015

House Education Committee
Chairman Ron Highland
10th & Jackson
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Chairman Highland and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Janeli Garcia, and I am a dreamer. I have attended Wichita public schools since 2002. I believe I can make my dreams come true just like anybody else. I have dreams of completing my college education at a 4 year university. And today those dreams are in danger of being dashed.

House Bill 2139 punishes Kansas students like myself because of our status, and I do not think this is fair. I came to the U.S. as a little girl. I grew up here. I went to school here. I made friends here. Kansas is my home. I want to continue my education after high school like many of my classmates have done. I care about my community want to give back after I graduate. Having grown up in Kansas and raised by hard working parents, I know it will not be easy. But i'm willing to work hard for it. I don't expect to be given anything extra. Just the same opportunity to attend school that every other Kansas kid is afforded.

I have always loved school and my honor roll certificates prove my dedication and perseverance. I knew that I could not afford a four-year university because the cost is too high. So, I worked hard to qualify for a Simon Youth Foundation Scholarship, which helps me pay the instate rate at Butler Community College, and I still have to work at a fast food restaurant during between going to class and studying, just so I can make ends meet. It can be hard and i'm tired lots of days but I know that it will pay off. I won't give up. I have faith that education will improve my life and Kansas will be better because of its investment in higher education.

My goal is to obtain an *Associate of Science in Psychology* and I hope to transfer to Wichita State University in 2016 so I can pursue a Bachelor's in Psychology. Now, if this bill takes away in-state tuition from me, I will not be able to afford to re enroll in the fall and I will have to drop out of college. Even with the scholarship I have worked hard to earn and my hours working in fast food, I won't be able to pay out-of-state tuition. It would be the most painful day of my life. To have to give up my dream of completing college. Knowing that I am smart enough to fulfill this dream. Knowing that I

have put in so much work to get this far. Knowing that every other Kansas student has this same opportunity except for me. I don't know what I would do if this were to happen.

I just want to succeed. I just want to start my career. I want to be able to continue to help my parents like I have so far. I want to be treated like all of my other friends and classmates I have grown up with. I want to work and be able to give back to my community. I dream of making Kansas a better place to live for my family, your family and all Kansas families. To do that, a college education is a must.

Please vote no on HB 2139 and do not take my dream of finishing my degree and transferring to a four year university away from me.

Janeli Garcia
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