

March 2, 2022

Good afternoon, my name is Gerson Vasquez. I was born in El Salvador. I came to America by myself, when I was 16-years-old. I am writing to support SB 501.

For my senior year of high school, I was living at my aunt's house and with friends from church. In about 2 years I will get my green card, but right now I am still undocumented and this has made it hard to get financial aid.

I learned about college, MHEC [**M-HACK**], and the MSFAA [**Miss - Fuh**] from people at CASA. I was happy to learn that I might get money for college but as we started the process I saw my opportunity close before my eyes.

Why? They were asking me for three years of taxes from my legal guardian but unfortunately, my aunt was not really my legal guardian.

Then there was a second option – I had to present three years of taxes done by me. But why would a kid like me have three years of taxes?

But this didn't stop me. I filed three years of “back taxes.” Then I had to get a document to show that I was “homeless” from my high school.

The English in the MSFAA [**Miss - Fuh**] was also complicated – and that is why I had to get help from many people.

Thankfully, I got the Guaranteed Access grant for my first two years of college, and now I have a 3.0 GPA at Montgomery College. But I know so many classmates who were just like me who don't have this opportunity because they don't know how to do the paperwork.

We need to make a process that is easy for those students who are in the same place as I was two years ago. I wish more undocumented students could have the same opportunity as me and I hope that you can change the regulations to make this process easy for us. This is why I am in support of SB 501

Thank you,

Gerson Vasquez.