

Testimony in Support of HB 60

Sickle Cell Disease – Institutions of Higher Education

Position: Favorable

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nyree Crowell, and I am a college student testifying in support of House Bill 60. While I do not live with sickle cell disease myself, I have been directly affected by it through a close family member. Watching someone I love navigate this condition has shaped my understanding of how deeply sickle cell disease disrupts daily life—especially for students pursuing higher education.

Sickle cell disease does not operate on a schedule. Pain crises and medical emergencies arise suddenly and require immediate attention. I have seen how these episodes force students to miss class, exams, and academic deadlines, not out of lack of commitment, but out of medical necessity. Despite this reality, colleges and universities are often unprepared to respond in a consistent and compassionate way.

What stands out most is how much responsibility is placed on students to advocate for themselves during moments of medical crisis. Instead of receiving built-in protections, students are often required to repeatedly disclose personal medical information, negotiate accommodations with individual professors, and hope for understanding that is not guaranteed. This lack of standardized procedures creates unnecessary stress and puts students with sickle cell disease at risk of falling behind academically through no fault of their own.

House Bill 60 offers a solution by establishing clear expectations for institutions of higher education. By requiring reasonable accommodations, defined reporting procedures, and education for faculty and staff, this bill shifts the burden off students and onto institutions where it belongs. It ensures that support is not dependent on chance, personal relationships, or individual discretion.

This legislation is about ensuring equal access to education. Students living with sickle cell disease should be evaluated on their abilities and efforts—not penalized for managing a serious, lifelong medical condition. Higher education should be a space where students are supported, not forced to choose between their health and their academic future.

For families like mine, HB 60 represents progress, accountability, and respect. It acknowledges the realities of sickle cell disease and takes meaningful steps to ensure students can pursue their education safely and successfully.

I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 60.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective and for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Nyree Crowell