



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB637 Higher Education – Undocumented Students – Out of State Tuition Exemption Eligibility

Greetings-

Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee,

My name is Gerson Quinteros and I am the DC, Maryland, and Virginia Lead Organizer for United We Dream, we are a national organization in service of immigrant young people across the nation and with one of our priority regions being Maryland. We currently serve and work along side over 33, 915 in Maryland with majority being immigrant young people and allies in support of young people. e ..

One of the many areas of work via United We Dream is supporting our High School members apply for college and we know first hand, Applying to college is already a daunting task, and it becomes even more challenging for undocumented students. Affording college as an undocumented individual can be difficult since many do not qualify for scholarships or financial aid.

In Maryland, some undocumented students may not qualify for the Maryland Dream Act due to tax requirements. For instance, one of our members did not fulfill the requirement of paying taxes for three years in the state of Maryland as their family made a decision to move out of state and then move back later in their high school years. We have seen how members who live in DC or in other states across the country move into the state of Maryland in their junior or senior year but do not qualify due to the requirement.

When students are not eligible for in-state tuition, Maryland loses high-performing students to other states. United We Dream Organizer has helped many youths in finding alternative college options outside of Maryland by searching for scholarships they qualify for or even finding affordable college options because they cannot afford the expensive tuition fees in the state. If SB637 passes, it will not only help students afford college in Maryland, but it will also help them enroll in colleges and universities in Maryland.

Maryland has always been a state that welcomes people from different backgrounds, and has set a great example of leadership for the DMV region. I recall the time when the Dream Act was passed in Maryland, and other states followed our lead and made similar changes. I trust that you will make the right decisions and pass the bill, because the future of many young people rests in your hands. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me.