

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

It would be naïve to think that only those who obtain education do so merely because they are driven individuals who have the capacity to accomplish what they want, and jump over many barriers. The reality is that although it takes a lot of strength to go to school, work and raise a family, some individuals are better positioned to succeed because of their economic status and family support. For an immigrant like me, that was exactly what I had during my college and university years. I had the support of my family and I had the support of the state that allowed me to pay in-state tuition while going to school. I lived in the metropolitan area during my school years, and I paid in-state tuition.

The truth is that I am still going to school and I still pay for in-state tuition. I am a Nurse. I have been serving this community for the past 12 years. I am now working on a Master's in Education. My passion is to serve others, and to improve the life of those I touch through my profession. I want to be an educator because I value education more than anything else. Education means dreaming, means open minds, and means progress. Education means better lives, better health, better jobs, better communities, cities and states. In today's world, the worst thing we can do is take away the support that fosters good choices and better individuals. Communities without education and self-esteem are communities that become corrupted, angry and dangerous.

Immigrant communities already deal with many stressful situations. Please do not take away in-state tuition for our students. Please don't corner us and then point at us for our failures. I know that if I did not have the option of paying in-state, I would not have been able to finish my education and to dream even bigger by continuing my education. I wouldn't had been able to serve and care for our community the way I have for the past 12 years if I did not have the education I obtained thanks to in-state tuition. Thank you for investing in me!

Lucia Jones, RN, BSN