

Janeth Vazquez

Private Citizen

2/25/2025

SB 254

Written only

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Janeth Vazquez, and I am a voter in Seward County. I am here to express my strong opposition to SB 254 and to urge you to vote against this bill to protect educational opportunities for all Kansans.

As a city commissioner in Liberal, Kansas, I have seen firsthand how access to education strengthens our communities and our local economy. Repealing in-state tuition for undocumented students would not only harm these hardworking individuals, but it would also negatively impact Kansas as a whole. When students—regardless of their immigration status—can pursue higher education, they develop the skills and expertise needed to fill critical jobs, start businesses, and contribute meaningfully to our state's future. Without access to in-state tuition, many talented students will be forced to abandon their dreams, leading to a less educated workforce and lost economic potential for Kansas.

It is also important to correct a common misconception: undocumented students do not receive public grants or benefits to attend school. They do not qualify for federal or state financial aid, subsidized loans, or public assistance programs like SNAP or Medicaid. The existing policy simply gives them the opportunity to pay the same tuition as their peers, rather than being charged out-of-state rates that put higher education completely out of reach. These students and their families contribute to our economy and pay taxes—just like everyone else. Denying them the ability to afford college does nothing but create additional barriers to their success and, ultimately, our state's success.

Additionally, this bill's presumption of flight risk for undocumented individuals contradicts the fundamental principle of "innocent until proven guilty." Automatically treating someone as a flight risk, solely based on immigration status, undermines due process and could lead to prolonged and unnecessary detentions. This is not only unfair but also unconstitutional.

Kansas thrives when we invest in our people. A well-educated population benefits everyone, from businesses looking for skilled workers to communities hoping to grow and prosper. I urge

you to reject SB 254 and stand in support of policies that promote opportunity, fairness, and economic growth for all Kansans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.