

Jessica Carr

Private Citizen

2/24/2025

SB 254

Written Only

Dear Chair Thompson and Members of the Committee -- Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective on SB 254. My name is Jessica Carr, and I am a resident and voter in Sedgwick County, Kansas. I support individuals who work hard, who strive for a higher education, who contribute to their community, and who participate in a vibrant Kansas economy. I also support the rule of law and the presumption of innocence. For these reasons, I ask you not to support SB 254. I provide additional facts below.

Undocumented Immigrants Pay Billions in Taxes

“Undocumented immigrants paid \$96.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes in 2022. Most of that amount, \$59.4 billion, was paid to the federal government while the remaining \$37.3 billion was paid to state and local governments” (Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, 2024).

Despite the massive financial contribution by undocumented individuals to our federal, state, and local economies, I note that Kansas DACA college students are not eligible for entitlements. They are not eligible for food stamps (SNAP); they are not eligible for non-emergency Medicaid; they are not eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); they are not eligible for Supplemental Security Income for disability; they are not eligible for ACA health coverage; and they are not eligible for public education grants or subsidized loans. Kansas DACA college students are simply eligible for in-state tuition. To receive this benefit, they must have attended a Kansas high school for 3 or more years, they must have graduated from a Kansas high school, and they must have been accepted into a Kansas postsecondary institution. These are individuals who value education and who strive to contribute to their community. We need them in Kansas. Please help them stay.

Kansas Brain Drain

Our state is fifth from last in keeping college grads in-state; we are losing almost 50% of our graduates (Kansas City Star, July 2024). The Higher Ed Immigration Portal reports that almost 12% of STEM Workers in Kansas are first-generation immigrants (including DACA). We need DACA graduates. Please help them stay.

Presumption of Innocence – Foundation of our Legal System

SB 254 proposes “creating a rebuttable presumption that a person determined to be an alien who is unlawfully present is at risk of flight”. I strongly oppose this, and I quote the U.S. Supreme Court in *Coffin v United States*, 1895: “a presumption of innocence in favor of the accused is the undoubted law, axiomatic and elementary, and its enforcement lies at the foundation of the administration of our criminal law.” I ask you not to support any encroachment upon the “axiomatic and elementary” presumption of innocence.

Thank you very much. I appreciate your service and commitment to all Kansans, and I encourage you to vote No on SB 254.