



Testimony in Opposition to SB 254

2/25/25

2025 - 2026 Board of Directors

Kansas Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

My name is Justin Gust, and I am here today on behalf of El Centro to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 254. We believe its consequences will be detrimental to the economic stability, public health, social integrity, and educational opportunities of our state.

This bill would strip away the ability for some Kansas high school graduates to be able to attend college by paying full in-state tuition at Kansas universities, a protection passed back in 2004 under HB2145. Kansas was the sixth state to pass in-state tuition, leading the way in the nation, as there are 25 states that offer in-state tuition. Back then, El Centro and other advocates fought hard and rallied to support in-state tuition. We knew allowing the opportunity to pay in-state tuition to all students, regardless of their immigration status, was a smart decision for Kansas. For two decades now, we have seen our immigrant students expand their education, completing degrees and certifications that strengthen our workforce and economy in Kansas. With their degrees, they pay more in taxes and contribute to growth across all sectors and industries. They do all of this without receiving any public student loans or state and federal aid. They have always been excluded from these benefits that their fellow classmates are offered, people like me were offered when attending college.

We urge you all to reject Senate Bill 254. Cutting in-state tuition for immigrant students adds more unnecessary barriers and ultimately hurts our state by preventing graduating immigrant high schoolers from realizing their full potential and contributing more to our economy and society. We stand with our immigrant families and students and fully oppose this legislation.



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