

Courtney Bell

Private Citizen

2/19/2005

SB 254

Written Only

Chair Thompson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 254 with you today. My name is Courtney Bell and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to protect educational opportunities for all Kansans and vote no on SB 254.

As a College Career Coordinator for nearly two decades, I've worked with hundreds of Dreamers over the years, amazing students who our state has invested in for their primary and secondary public educational careers. Working with these students is both challenging and a blessing. The challenges of securing college and tech school opportunities without state or federal funding are very real, but watching the resilience and determination of these students—young people who have spent almost their entire lives as Kansans—as they pursue the education and training necessary despite these obstacles is inspiring and a privilege I don't take lightly. These students, who are vital members of our communities, use in-state tuition rates to increase their contributions and build better communities across our state. For as long as I have been helping Dreamers go to college, the sponsor of this bill has been working against their ability to do so. No matter what the xenophobic propaganda says, Dreamers use scholarships and/or pay out of pocket to our Kansas colleges, making a net positive financial impact on our post secondary institutions. This has been confirmed by the testimony of our Kansas colleges year after year after year after year, when the same people spread the same misinformation to attack in-state tuition for Dreamers, children who our state had helped learn and grow with a public education. Not only is this bill cruel to the core, but it also makes zero fiscal sense. Why would you invest thousands upon thousands of dollars in these students and then limit their opportunities to make a return on that investment by working as health care, education, public safety, engineering, and trade professionals (just to name a few examples)—careers that contribute to the overall wellbeing of our Kansas communities? It is bad educational and fiscal policy.

I humbly ask you vote no on SB 254. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share.