

I am Benjamin Martinez, and I am here today representing the immigrant community, and I am undocumented high school student. I am a junior in high school. Thank you very much for the opportunity to present my testimony in support of the legislation.

Seventeen years ago I was born in Oaxaca, Mexico, and I had lived there for thirteen years. In those thirteen years I had good and bad times. When I was only three years old my dad died and everything change since then, my mother had to work hard to support every each of my brothers and sisters. A couple years later my brothers and my sister came to the United States looking for a better future. They have work in fields, planting pines, and other hard work. Because they do not want me to have the same life as them, they brought me in 2009 to the United States to find more opportunities for my future. Now I have three years in the United States, I am really proud of myself because I know how to speak English, although my English is not perfect but I can communicate with others. My family brought me here to study and to reach my dreams. Dreams that sometimes people like me think that never will achieve them because we are undocumented.

Since I got here I have work really hard, I could say that because I have work hard in field piking blueberries, strawberries, and grapes so I can save some money for college. I work hard out of school and in school too. I have been very involved in school; some clubs that I have participated in are link crew, M.E.Ch.A, mock trial, Saturday school, summer school, and others. I have been in link crew for the last two years, and we help every freshman to have success in high school.

I joy M.E.Ch.A three years ago and now I am the president of this club and every each of the M.E.Ch.A members want to go to college but in more than one occasion we cannot go to the college that we want because we are undocumented.

Since I started high school, it has been my dream to graduate on time with a good GPA. I attend school every single school day, and I have perfect attendance.

Today for undocumented students it's hard to obtain a college education because we are not accepted in universities or if universities accept undocumented students they/we have to pay much more than as an American citizen. I have been living in the U.S. since 2009 and I don't know why not all students have the same

right although we go the same school, and we live in the same country .I want to attend school because I want to help others who are hard worker like me an want a better future not just for them but they want a better future for the whole community. Probably we as undocumented students would not be able to expand our education to get a good job because the cost of higher education is expensive for me. Please remove this unnecessary barrier for young people who are our future. Organization like tuition equity would make an incredible difference in my life and the lives of many other smart and talented undocumented youth students.

Thank for the opportunity that all of you give me today to share my story, and I respectfully ask to vote “yes” on tuition equity.