



Momentum Alliance
700 N Killingsworth, Portland, OR 97230
Testimony of Maritza Ramon
In support of SB932, Access to Opportunity
March 24, 2015

Dear Chair Roblan, Vice Chair Knopp and Esteemed Members of the Committee.

My name is Maritza Ramon, and I am a student at Portland Community College. I am here today to ask you to support SB 932, Access to Opportunity.

I was a one year old baby, when I arrived to the land of freedom and dreams. My mother migrated to the United States to provide me with a better life, it was just me and her. I don't remember the screams or the fears of my journey, but I can feel the intensity of emotions my mother has, when we talk about it.

I never saw myself as being different, because I grew in the culture and language. But being undocumented made me different. Sometimes it seems that my dreams will come to an end, the dreams I have, of becoming a teacher, an astronaut, and a nurse; because my community isn't aware of me, it has categorized me as a criminal. But in reality, I'm a student who is fighting to succeed.

I knew then that education is my light. I knew not to give into fear, but fight and work hard in order to not let myself down and make my parents proud. They left behind their land and loved ones, so that I could have a better life, a life with opportunities.

During my senior in high school, my AVID and Government teacher gave me the motivation I needed to keep me going, despite of reality. They kept saying: "You'll find a way to attend college, obtain your dream job and leave a mark on this earth, just don't give up. You're so close."

For my first year, I went to Mt. Hood Community College, now I attend Portland Community College, and I love it! As a nursing student, I found my passion of healing by care and compassion. However, I'm still not done with my pre-requisites. I'm not a full time student, because I have to pay for school on my own. It's just so hard making ends meet. I know, I won't be done in three years, and it scares me to see that my dreams are being threaten again. I'm working extremely hard to get a higher education, and the thought of not being able to get in-state tuition, worries me A LOT!

I enjoy being at school and seeing the joy that education brings to my fellow undocumented peers, but I think about the future and realize that it's not easy for none of us. Graduating within 5 years is unrealistic! I can barely afford to take one or two classes, how can I be expected to transfer so soon?

I'm afraid that all my hard work is going to be taken for granted... It doesn't matter what college or university one goes to, but the desire to learn, yet there's the consistent obstacle- money.



There's no financial support available to me, and I know that without your support my dreams will be shattered.

I'm proud to say that I'm a college student. It has not been easy at all, I have lost a scholarship, but I'm slowly bringing myself up and making my best effort to get there. Even though money is such a struggle, I'm fighting to win the battle. I need you all to make my dream come true. I need you to be my allies... to believe in my dreams and hard work. I have wings, but I need help continuing to fly.

I urge you to support SB 932, Access to Opportunity. Thank you once again for your time.

Sincerely,

Maritza Ramon

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