

HCS HB 187 -- STUDENTS IN UNLAWFUL STATUS

SPONSOR: Fitzpatrick

COMMITTEE ACTIONS: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 8 to 2. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Education by a vote of 7 to 3.

Currently, a student unlawfully present in the United States is prohibited from receiving a postsecondary education public benefit. This bill changes the law to prohibit a student in unlawful immigration status in the United States from receiving a postsecondary education public benefit, including students who have pending cases under the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) guidelines.

The bill also prohibits a Missouri public higher education institution from offering a tuition rate to any student with an unlawful immigration status that is less than the rate charged to citizens or nationals of the United States whose residence is not in Missouri and requires that the students be charged the same tuition rate as international students

The bill repeals the provision prohibiting a student from using an award under the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program to enroll in a course of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that with the limited funds that exist for certain higher education benefits, the bill will more clearly define who is eligible for those benefits.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Fitzpatrick.

OPPOSERS: Those opposing the bill say that the bill will include more people than just those under the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and decrease the possibilities for a more educated workforce.

Testifying against the bill were Karina Arango; Karissa Anderson; Catholic Charities Archdiocese of St. Louis; and Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates.

INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES: Others testifying informed the committee that under current law, DACA students would be eligible for higher education benefits.

Testifying for informational purposes were William Thornton and Leroy Wade, Department of Higher Education.