



Northern Illinois University

*Testimony presented to the House Higher Education Committee regarding
Senate Bill 2196 by Don Sevener on May 11, 2016*

I am here today on behalf of NIU President Doug Baker and would like to read the following statement.

While I am unable to attend the hearing today, I wanted to voice my strong support for Senate Bill 2196.

Northern Illinois University is committed to the access and affordability goals of the Illinois Public Agenda. In my three years as NIU President, the administration and our Board have held the line on cost increases and made major improvements in our processes aimed at improving the student experience and increasing student retention.

We are also committed to ensuring that all students receive the financial assistance and support services they need to complete their degrees and achieve their dreams — to ensure them the student career success that leads to employment in their field of study, to further study in graduate school, to volunteer activities, to build a family.

While undocumented students currently have access to in-state tuition in Illinois, more needs to be done to support this vibrant student population that has so much to offer. I appreciate the hard work of the students in the NIU DreamAction network who are trying to build just and inclusive opportunities. Many of these students have very limited financial means and represent the first in their family to attend college. Access to financial aid will help students complete their degrees, enter the workforce and become active in their community.

I offer full support of this legislation.