

Lilia Burdo

Institution: Three Rivers Community College

Major: Liberal Arts and Sciences

Year: Freshman

Good evening, Appropriations Committee. My name is Lilia Burdo. I am from Norwich and am in my second semester at Three Rivers Community College. My current major is Liberal Arts and Science; however, I plan to pursue Secondary English Education. I am here to advocate for PACT funding.

Before I even applied for college, I set a goal to graduate with as little debt as possible. Attending a community college promotes financial responsibility so enrolling at Three Rivers was a valid option, but when I heard PACT was going through, it was a no-brainer. To pursue secondary English education, I have to transfer to a state school. State schools are not cheap. I know that as soon as I transfer, tuition skyrockets, textbook prices increase, and I am going to have to seriously consider commuting versus living on campus. With PACT, I am not worrying about paying for my Associates, and can focus on saving for my future schooling that is necessary for my career goal. There are a lot of college students that cannot pay for higher education out of pocket, straight out of high school. Some students have to take a gap year to earn enough money to even enter college, and there are students that take that year and never return to school. Students may not have monetary assistance from their family because there might have been an illness or medical situation, for example, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. There are families that may have a parent who was laid off, someone who was furloughed due to Covid, do not quite qualify for financial aid yet they could really use that assistance, and there are students who simply do not have parents who are willing to pay for their higher education. Perhaps they have several children in the family and parents can't commit to assisting all of their children with paying for tuition, or they want to teach their kids financial responsibility. The bottom line is, there are so many students that cannot afford college, and if they do attend, they must deal with the burden of debt. PACT is allowing me to work towards achieving my financial goals of minimizing debt, while also helping me accomplish my educational goals by allowing me to save now yet continue my studies at the same time. I hope a solution to any funding issues can be resolved, as it would mean a great deal if my friends and younger sibling in high school can also have this same financial opportunity that I have. Thank you.