

March 21, 2012

Good day, my name is Fernando Marroquin, and I live in Hartford Connecticut since January of 2010. I work for the City of Hartford and before I came here I was a General Surgeon in my country, Guatemala. I am here today to testify in favor of this bill because I think that a healthy population is a productive population.

When I came to the United States, I had the idea that this country offered equal opportunities to its residents in every way, but I noticed that this idea was not true. I quickly realized that people were struggling because they couldn't afford a simple preventive physical exam that might give them the opportunity to know if anything is wrong with their minds and/or bodies so they can do something about it. Knowledge is power, most of us have heard that quote, and I think that this plan gives anyone covered by it, the knowledge and power to make informed decisions about their health when they can actually afford to go to a health professional.

I am not here to compare United States or Connecticut with a third world country, but even in Guatemala, ANYONE can have basic medical attention without having to pay for it, and sometimes even without having insurance. It was truly a shock when I realized that one of the top economies in the world does not take care of its residents when they are sick. Another shocking situation is that a lot of elected officials and state employees, who are not in the business of making money, think about the bottom line before a healthy human being. I don't see a problem investing state money in a program that the federal government will reimburse in 2014 meanwhile having an ongoing program that can cover almost a 100,000 healthy –or at least well controlled- Connecticut residents. These residents can put the \$300 a month that they will have to spend in their private insurance without this plan, back into the economy to support local businesses or to pay the other bills that they have.

The cost of having uninsured people is high: these people don't have anywhere to go when their children are sick, so they end up in our local emergency rooms. They know that they cannot afford to pay that bill, but if their children are sick they want the best treatment possible. They also know that the hospitals and insurance companies will not pay that bill, it will be us, the ones that can afford insurance right now that will get our premiums raised so those bills can be paid. If the people covered by this plan can have the opportunity to take their children on time to a health professional using this program, we will have less sick children in emergency rooms, we will have more parents working not being absent from their jobs because they have to take their children to the emergency room of a hospital that they cannot afford. If we have more coverage, we will have less uninsured people in those hospitals and we will have fewer bills to indirectly pay.

I believe in God, and I believe that he created all of us humans, equal. We all should have equal opportunities and equal rights; access to Health Care is a right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Speaking about important declarations, according to the Declaration of independence of the United States: "...all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" You cannot pursuit happiness if you are sick, that is why I ask you to pass this bill.