

Dear Members of the Insurance and Real State Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Amelia, and I am a college student. I am an ally of the immigrant community, and I stand in support of **HB5251- AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THIS STATE**. This bill would create a task force to study the current state of healthcare access for undocumented immigrants, and to promote increased insurance coverage for these communities.

I am so lucky to have access to proper healthcare. I have a severe food allergy, and medical equipment tends to prove costly, but luckily, due to my healthcare, cost has not been a burden. Yet so many families are living without this necessity that has proved so crucial for me. Nobody, no matter their immigration status, should have to live in fear of being unable to pay for medical care.

The establishment of this task force is a *critical* step that our state must take in favor of *saving lives*. Being undocumented does not make any individual less deserving of healthcare, or any other basic human right. Citizenship status should not be a determinant of health and wellness — but by limiting undocumented individuals' access to healthcare, the state of Connecticut is perpetuating health disparities and systemic inequities within communities of color. This is no longer a matter of policy alone: this is a matter of life and death.

Expanding HUSKY coverage to undocumented immigrants is necessary, but this expansion must be done thoughtfully and with immigrants' lived experiences in mind. To this end, the task force cannot be comprised of politicians alone: diverse voices and representatives from advocacy organizations are key to the success of this task force. For this reason, we ask that individuals from groups such as the Connecticut Immigrants Rights Alliance, Connecticut Students for a Dream, the Universal Health Care Foundation, and Health Equity Solutions be included in the task force.

Access to healthcare should not be a commodity only for the wealthy and privileged who can afford it. It is a human right and no person should be denied or face obstacles in obtaining the healthcare they need due to the ability to pay or immigration status. Denying health insurance on the basis of immigration status is a clear violation of human rights, and must be stopped.

In conclusion, I would like to restate my strong support for HB5251. The state of Connecticut cannot remain complicit in systemic discrimination against immigrant communities — they are *people* worthy of dignity and respect, and must be treated as such. The establishment of this task force is the least our state can do, and I ask the committee to vote favorably on this important and necessary measure.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Amelia D.