

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

My name is Nick Jacobson, and I am a young student in Connecticut. I am an advocate of my whole community in New Haven, which includes many immigrants, and my ancestors were immigrants only a few decades ago. 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 have been fortunate to have had healthcare for my lifetime through my mother's employer. I have a genetic mutation that required daily medication for the first fifteen years of my life. Without healthcare, the cost of the medication would have been unaffordable. No one should have to worry about how to pay medical bills.

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.

Healthcare is a human right. It is the right moral and economic decision to make for our state.

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,

Nick Jacobson