



Testimony of
Carlos Moreno, Deputy State Director
Connecticut Working Families Organization

February 25, 2020

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

My name is Carlos Moreno. I live in Cornwall, CT and I'm the Deputy Director of the Connecticut Working Families Organization, an anti-racist, multi-racial, progressive political organization that builds power for working people.

We 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 taskforce with the objective to study of any means available to promote and increase health insurance coverage for undocumented immigrants in the state.

Expanding coverage and making it equitable for undocumented immigrants makes financial sense for CT. The federal government already covers urgent care, which is very expensive. Hospitals are required to care for all individuals below certain income levels with life threatening conditions, which is covered under emergency Medicaid and the state. This system forces uninsured people - documented and undocumented - to turn to emergency rooms as the first point of medical care, often for preventable conditions which could have been treated for far less than fees charged by emergency services. An inclusive healthcare system with a focus on prevention, early diagnosis and treatment for everyone regardless of immigration status would our state avoid or reduce costs over time.

More so, undocumented immigrants pay into our healthcare system, but cannot access services when needed. In Connecticut, they pay roughly 145 million dollars into state and local taxes every year, funding state healthcare programs, such as Medicaid, but due to their status are unable to access any of these health programs.

As taxpayers funding state health programs, undocumented residents deserve an equal and fair opportunity to access the very programs we fund.

We urge the committee to study this issue and hope you will pass HB5251.

Thank you to Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon and members of the insurance committee for raising this bill.