

To the Honorable Committee on Insurance and Real Estate:

My name is Kenneth Speyer. I reside at 13 Audubon St., New Britain, CT.

I urge you to pass HB 5251, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THIS STATE. As I am unable to attend the public hearing tomorrow, Feb. 25, I am submitting this written testimony.

Connecticut should do everything possible to insure health insurance coverage for all residents of our state, including citizens, documented immigrants and undocumented immigrants, for two major reasons. First, it is the right and moral thing to do. In our society, health care is an essential human right. No one should die or suffer the debilitating effects of disease due to cost. We are our brothers' and sisters' keeper, and we are commanded to treat "the stranger in our midst" as we treat citizens, and as we wish to be treated ourselves.

Second, it is likely to save the state money, and improve health care for our citizens, in the long run. Far too often, people without health insurance put off medical treatment until it costs far more than timely treatment would have cost; and late treatment may be ineffective or less effective. People going to the Emergency Room for conditions which could and should have been treated sooner, in a doctor's office or clinic, also delay everyone's access to genuine emergency treatment. Our hospital emergency rooms treat everyone, as they should, without regard to immigration status. Restoring people to health also enables them to return to work sooner, so that they can support themselves and their families. The proposed Task Force should be able to quantify these economic benefits.

Thank you for your consideration.