

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of S.B. No. 956: “AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS”

Dear Senator Marilyn Moore and Representative Catherine F. Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Connecticut General Assembly Human Services Committee:

My name is Samantha Baer and I am an OB/GYN physician in New Haven, CT. I stand in support of S.B. No. 956: “AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS”. This bill would provide medical assistance to some groups of qualifying low-income residents regardless of immigration status.

I am currently a Family Planning fellow at Yale New Haven Hospital, in New Haven, CT. We provide contraceptive and abortion care to any patient who needs our services. I feel so fortunate to be practicing in Connecticut, where many of our patients have Medicaid/Husky and therefore have access to high quality, efficient, and respectful care. However, this does not apply to our patients without insurance due to their immigration status. We regularly take care of these patients, and many of them struggle financially to be able to afford even our subsidized pricing.

Recently, our team took care of a patient whose access to care was severely limited by her immigration status and her inability to access care. She was seeking family planning services and after struggling to pay out of pocket for her procedure, we were unable to place an intrauterine device which she wanted (and for which she was a great candidate) because of billing limitations. It is heartbreaking to be unable to adequately care for patients due to their insurance status, and she would have been willing to pay for insurance if that were an option for her. She will now be unable to prevent a pregnancy in the future, which she wants to do, and it leaves me feeling like I am forced to provide substandard care because of financial concerns.

These same financial limitations apply to many of our undocumented patients, many of whom are not pregnant and struggle to afford care for necessities including adequate contraception, cervical cancer and breast cancer screenings, and routine health maintenance. I encourage you to consider expanding insurance access to all residents, regardless of immigration status, because we know that these critical healthcare services lead to a healthier, more productive population and are cost effective in the long term.

Offering undocumented immigrants the opportunity to buy into AccessHealth CT or to qualify for the Medicaid/Medicare system would give them the ability to access our care and services, and to regain control over their reproductive lives. Thank you for considering this bill providing access to insurance for some of our patients, and please consider expanding this coverage to all of our patients. I support S.B. No. 956 and hope the committee will vote favorably.

Thank you for your time,

Samantha Baer, MD, ScM