

March 11, 2021

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Lisa Bergmann. I live at 49 Livingston Street in New Haven CT. I am testifying today as a member of the Connecticut Communist Party Winchester/Newhallville Club.

I stand in support of S.B. No. 956: "AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS," with clear language that extends eligibility to all HUSKY programs to all CT residents, regardless of immigration status. I urge the members of the committee to stand with us and give this bill your full support.

I work in the health care field, supporting unionized food service workers in Connecticut in accessing health benefits. Many of these workers are undocumented. They are paying the same amount in taxes as their co-workers who were born in this country, however they are unable to access state health programs such as Husky. During this past year, nearly all of the workers I support in my job were laid off. I was able to support some workers in transitioning to Husky when they lost their jobs. However, the undocumented workers could not qualify for Husky and were left with no insurance once their employer stopped paying for their coverage. In these cases, I searched for free clinics for these members, but many free clinics are open only for limited hours and do not have specialized care that is needed for common chronic conditions such as diabetes and cancer. Some of these members ended up in the hospital soon after their coverage ended due to lack of access to their medication or other routine care.

Beyond the unionized workforce, our undocumented community is usually doing the hardest jobs that include the fewest employer-paid benefits. This is the community that needs Husky the most. If our undocumented neighbors lack access to care for COVID, STI's, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, etc, our whole community is at higher risk for these illnesses.

If SB 956 is passed, it would make our entire state safer for everyone.

I support S.B. No 956, with clear language to extend current HUSKY eligibility rules to all CT residents, regardless of immigration status, and I ask the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time,
Lisa Bergmann
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