



CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

RE: S.B. 956 (RAISED) AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

Recommended Committee Action: SUPPORT THE BILL

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (CT AILA) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization comprised of immigration attorneys and law professors. AILA was founded in 1946 to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.

The Connecticut Chapter has approximately 180 members who represent U.S. families seeking permanent residence for close family members, as well as U.S. businesses seeking talent from the global marketplace. We also represent foreign students, entertainers, athletes, and asylum seekers, often on a pro bono basis.

CT AILA supports Raised Bill 956, An Act Providing Medical Assistance To Certain Individuals Regardless Of Immigration Status. We believe that our state has both a moral and fiscal responsibility to make medical coverage available to all low-income residents, regardless of immigration status. As many health care providers have testified, patients who lack medical coverage typically do not obtain preventive care, tend to rely on under-resourced neighborhood clinics and hospital emergency rooms for their health care needs, and are forced to leave illnesses untreated until they become catastrophic, ultimately necessitating expensive hospital-based care. The current COVID crisis, notably, has made it clear that the inability of some residents to access quality medical care has devastating consequences not only for them, but also for their families, entire communities, and the state.

Under current law, undocumented residents of Connecticut are prohibited from purchasing private health insurance coverage through Access Health CT and are ineligible for Medicaid, Medicare, and other state and federal health insurance programs. Low-income residents who otherwise would be eligible to enroll in HUSKY are unable to do so unless they are U.S. citizens or have been U.S. permanent residents for five or more years.

We urge you to expand health care access for immigrants by approving S.B. 956 and removing immigration status as a basis for denying medical assistance and eligibility under the state's HUSKY programs.

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