

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

My name is Brisa Cruz, I am a student at Eastern Connecticut State University and a resident of the city of West Haven. I am undocumented.

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 am a senior studying criminology and political science in hopes of becoming a lawyer. My parents migrated to the U.S in 2000 in hope of giving me a better future and more opportunities than the ones they were offered. During their first few years in the US my parents did not have a car, they would take the city bus to get to work or ride a bike. One day after my father's shift he was riding his bicycle back home when a car hit him. The car ran his leg over, and the people that had witnessed the incident called 911. He was then transported to the hospital via ambulance and had to undergo surgery. The surgery was successful but it required him to be off his leg for a couple of months to be able to make a full recovery. This meant that he would be unable to work and the only money coming in would be my mom's income. A month after the surgery we received the hospital bill in the mail. The bill was huge. The incident took place in 2002 and it wasn't until last week that my dad was finally able to pay off the medical bill completely. He had been making payments for over 15 years.

My father isn't the only one that has had to seek medical help and because of our inability to access healthcare have become indebted. This is a story that is all too familiar and is seen far too many times in families. There have been a number of times in which my parents have become sick and wait until it gets pretty bad before they even consider seeking medical attention. They try all the home remedies and exhaust every single avenue before going to the doctor's. They know that there is a high cost that comes with walking into that doctor's office. Healthcare should not be a luxury that only some can afford, it should be available to everyone regardless of status.

If this bill were to pass it would mean that my family and my community would be able to seek medical attention at the first sign of a problem rather than waiting until it gets bad. It would mean that a trip to the doctors would no longer be something we fear but rather something that we can do. We shouldn't have to make GoFundMe pages and rely on the kindness of strangers over the internet to help pay for our medical expenses.

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,
Brisa Cruz