

My name is Darcy Curillo, and I am currently a resident of New Milford, CT, but I was born and raised in Danbury, CT. I am a patient care coordinator at the AmeriCares Free Clinic. Our clinic provides care to the underserved population of the greater Danbury area. The majority of our patients are undocumented immigrants who have struggled to obtain equitable healthcare due to their ineligibility for health insurance.

I STRONGLY stand in support of S.B. No. 956.

AmeriCares provides free preventative and general medical services to our patients. However, there are limitations. There always comes a time when a patient cannot be covered for a particular medical procedure or a specialty appointment (Brain and Spine specialty care, Psychiatric, prenatal, and orthopedic care, to name a few). It saddens me to have to be the one to give them the disheartening news that we won't be able to provide the healthcare they need. The cost of such medical attention is the equivalent of a month's paycheck or more for our patients.

Also, due to COVID, we have been unable to take in new patients. Every day I go into work, we receive countless phone calls of people requesting to register as new patients. Each time I have to give them the upsetting news that we can't take them as a new patient, and each time I get the question, "I'm undocumented. I don't qualify for healthcare insurance. Where else can I go?"

Free-clinics play an integral role in the lives of undocumented immigrants, but this is NOT enough! Resources are limited! Adequate coverage is lacking! The current U.S. healthcare system has failed to meet the medical demands of undocumented immigrants. Preventing these individuals from accessing healthcare coverage is unethical and a violation of a fundamental human rights. In addition to immigration status, obstacles such as fear of deportation, cost, and language also hinder many undocumented immigrants from seeking medical attention. How are we to prevent adverse health outcomes among my community?

We must make changes to our healthcare system to reduce disparities. We need changes that will allow undocumented immigrants to obtain early detection and treatment of diseases before they progress to life-threatening and significantly costly complications.

I am confident this bill will be a significant step towards accomplishing these changes and allowing my community to receive the quality healthcare every human deserves.

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,
Darcy Curillo