

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

My name is Katia Daley, I am a resident from Vernon, CT. I am formerly undocumented and come from a family of mixed immigration status. I am also an organizer with Connecticut Students for a Dream and 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.

Prior to having insurance through my husband's work insurance package. I was someone that feared getting hurt due to the strenuous cost that it would put on my family. I would not get checked for preventive measures because if something came out wrong and I need more specialized care I would be referred out and would not be able to pay the cost of those extensive and specialized procedures.

I want to share my story from when I was in sophomore year of high school. I was a varsity athlete on my volleyball team. At one of the away games, I had just finished warming up with my teammate and when I was retrieving the ball, I jumped in an awkward way, and when I landed I sprained my ankle. It hurt so much, but I didn't say anything. I played the first set without complaining but my coach had already figured out something was wrong. She pulled me out and asked me why I was limping? I told her that I had sprained my ankle and that I was in pain. She was of course furious and took me out of the game. I started crying, and my teammates tried to calm me down and let me know that the pain will go away. I let them know that it wasn't the pain that was making me cry. It was that I didn't know how I was going to let my parents know that I needed an x-ray, physical therapist and pain relievers. The thought that I would be a financial burden to my family scared me so much, that I had that reaction.

I let you know my story, although not life threatening because it tells you how fast I had to mature. I needed to understand that my actions could have a great impact on my family's finances. That me not being able to have access to healthcare would be so detrimental to my family at that moment.

With my story I have only covered the mental and emotional strain that undocumented immigrants face due to the barriers to health care that they need. There are more barriers such as lack of coverage, no language access, fear about immigration status and discrimination in doctor's offices and other aspects of the health system all make it more difficult for immigrants to get preventive and long-term health care. Ensuring that all immigrants can access Medicaid will take away one of the many barriers to care for immigrants, an important step toward health justice in our state.

I ask all of you to think about your children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces when you hear my story. Think about them shutting down in fear due to not being able to pay for an injury. 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,

Katia Daley

Healthcare Campaign Organizer

Connecticut Students for a Dream