

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

My name is Emily Diaz, I am a student from Bristol. I am the daughter of immigrants and I stand in support of SB956: AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS, but with modifications. SB956 as currently written leaves out many in our immigrant community, it leaves out low-income parents and children under HUSKY A and low-income elderly and disabled folks under HUSKY C. I support modifying SB956 to include ALL CT residents that qualify under the full current HUSKY eligibility.

I am a first year college student at the University of Connecticut. I come from a low income household. I live with four siblings and my parents. My parents are from Mexico. They have been in the United States since 1992. My father and mother were having trouble paying rent in New York so we moved to Connecticut in 2014.

My siblings and I were born in the United States and have access to healthcare insurance now. However my parents and my aunt, who is like a second mother to me, do not have that privilege. My mother has depression and high blood pressure. My aunt has diabetes and high blood pressure. My father has worked everyday and has almost never taken a well deserved day off. Over the years, his knee and back pain have been excruciating for him. He has started to limp. However he refuses to go to the doctor because he does not want another bill to pay when he is working just enough to pay for necessities. The two strong women who have raised me have trouble paying for their doctor visits and their medications. My aunt is on six medications at the moment and my mother is on three. They sometimes have to ask one of my siblings to help pay for her medication or appointments. My aunt and mother have to see the doctor but the numbers on their bills keep rising. One time I accompanied my aunt to her appointment. The doctor told my aunt her diabetes is not getting any better so they had to change her prescription to a stronger one. The next day, I went to the pharmacy with the supposed cheapest prices for her medications. When we picked up her prescriptions the sales associate told us the total was a little over \$500. Never in my life had I seen something so tiny cost so much. Not only is it tiny but essential. Why is it fair for someone, especially a person who is low-income, to pay hundreds for medication they need to live? Had it not been for the award I earned, I would have no money to give. My family did not have money to give either. She was on her last pills. It pains me to think she might not have been able to treat her diabetes and high blood pressure. Her condition would have gotten worse.

It is a privilege that I can pick up medicine I need and not have to worry how I will be paying for it. There are others like my aunt and mother who have diseases that need to be treated with prescription medication. Yet as low income individuals they have to pay more than half a months rent in order to treat it. The cheap prices are not cheap for individuals like them. It is unfair to deny low-income people access to health care just because of their immigration status. It would relieve my parents and aunt from the stress of having to pay just for an appointment. My father could have his pain treated by something he has had for almost 8 years. My aunt could treat her diabetes and high blood pressure without having to spend almost half of her money. My mother can start going to the doctor more frequently and be more encouraged to go to her therapy sessions and take care of her mental health. I know there are more people in similar situations and deserve the right to medical assistance.

I support S.B. No 956 with the modifications above, and hope the committee will make those changes.

Thank you for your time,
Emily Diaz