

Testimony
Human Services Committee
March 11, 2021
In support of SB 956 Providing Medical Assistance
to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status

Joelle Fishman, Chair, Connecticut Communist Party USA

Senator Moore, Rep Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Joelle Fishman, I live in New Haven, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Communist Party in favor of SB 956 Providing Medical Assistance to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status – the bill known as “Husky for Immigrants.”

The COVID – 19 pandemic has revealed the need to strengthen our health care system overall, and has also exposed long term inequalities of race and economics in health care and all areas of life.

In this pandemic, immigrant communities have been excluded from all relief and left to rely on mutual aid. The lack of availability to health care is a matter of life and death. Live and death for the community that is excluded, but life and death to the entire community as a result. The need to fix this injustice has become an emergency in the pandemic.

I had the opportunity to hear some of the young people from Husky for Immigrants speak during a Black History Month Youth March in New Haven. After telling their stories their message was straightforward. What affects one community affects all communities. They asked for support of SB 956.

It is estimated that immigrant workers pay \$1.8 billion in state and local taxes to CT, of which \$145 million are paid by immigrants without documents. It is unjust that while these taxes contribute to funding the Husky program, immigrants are currently excluded from coverage. SB 956 takes necessary steps to fix this injustice and provide dignity and economic well being to immigrant families.

We also support strengthening the language of SB 956 to include low-income parents, caretakers and children under HUSKY A, and low-income elderly and disabled under HUSKY C. Health care should be a basic human right.

We urge passage of SB 956 with the additional expanded language in this session. Thank you for bringing this bill forward, and for all your ongoing efforts to meet the needs of the people of our state.

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