

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

My name is Jennifer Gawitt Pratt. I currently work at Family Life Education, a family center in Hartford where many of our clients are 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 have been a part of the nonprofit community in Connecticut for more than 15 years. While I am very fortunate to have health coverage for myself and my family, I am often reminded thru my work that others in our community do not have the same access. I have seen parents and grandparents go without necessary medications or skipping doctor appointments because they do not have insurance and the out-of-pocket cost is unrealistic for many. No parent or grandparent should have to make choices like that.

On a broader scale, a high uninsured rate can result in community members only treating emergent conditions (often in the high-cost Emergency Department). People without insurance are less likely to receive preventative care or to access services for major health conditions or chronic disease.

"Because people without health coverage are less likely than those with insurance to have regular outpatient care, they are more likely to be hospitalized for avoidable health problems and to experience declines in their overall health. When they are hospitalized, uninsured people receive fewer diagnostic and therapeutic services and also have higher mortality rates than those with insurance." (Key Facts about the Uninsured Population – Jennifer Tolbert, Kendal Orgera and Anthony Damico).

The benefits of enacting SB 956 would extend beyond those without health insurance and would benefit the entire community. 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,

Jennifer Gawitt Pratt