

Distinguished members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut:

Hello, my name is Adelaida Gonzalez. I am a resident of New Haven. I am undocumented and a member of the Semilla Collective.

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 arrived in the U.S. when I was 16, leaving my country of origin, Mexico, to search for a better future. But after a few months of arrival I ended up in the hospital with an illness, where I was inpatient for 2 weeks. The most difficult for me was to not work because of being underage and having no health insurance, with very expensive bills. I fell into a deep depression, seeing myself going into debt and ill because I had to find a way to address my medical costs and be able to overcome all the barriers in this country.

The pandemic has affected us greatly, with everyone losing their jobs or having reduced hours. It has been very difficult for us. Just like citizens we contribute, paying our taxes. We risk too much and we are the ones who suffer the most during this pandemic, doing the most difficult jobs. Sometimes I feel bad and only have to bear it. Sometimes you have pain, without a physical check-up, without having health insurance, being without immigration status. It affects us a lot. This system is unjust and excludes us from everything, above all from healthcare access. For example, my husband woke up with a terrible pain in his hand. It was paralyzed and we had to go to the emergency room. I was left without work. It also affected my husband in his work because he had been working in a restaurant. He was told he needed to see a bone specialist, an orthopedist, but the consultations are very expensive. He could not go because of the cost, so he just tried to endure and be strong. He went to some physical therapy but did not get better. We could no longer pay for the therapy, because we were both left without work and we had to either keep paying for the treatment, or pay the rent. At Yale and in the clinic they said that they didn't know why his hand was paralyzed. Suddenly, he couldn't move it. He worked in a kitchen and began to drop things, he could no longer hold a knife because he didn't have strength in his hand. After so many years working there, the boss hired another person for the job. Now my husband has spent 2 months without work and there is no income.

Yes, we avoid going to the doctor. You have to pay out of pocket for everything. Right now I have a problem with a molar, with two weeks bearing the pain. They need to take out the tooth. I have headaches every day. It has affected us with our debts and bills. At the beginning when the pandemic started in March, they closed my work for almost 5 months. I returned to work but just 1-2 days a week, I don't have consistent work. We are worried about the rent and the other bills. We have 3 children. Psychologically and emotionally, it has affected all of us, especially our children. We had to pay \$1,000 for the physical therapy for my husband's hand. We could not continue with it, so he had to stop the treatment.

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,  
Adelaida Gonzalez

