

Dear Members of Human Services Committee of Connecticut:

My name is Taurino Ignacio Jiménez and I am from New Haven, Connecticut. I am involved with 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.

This year, I tested positive for COVID and still had to find a way to pay bills. I received many calls from health clinics to collect payments. I also have diabetes which has affected my vision, and I owe \$8,000 for an earlier stay in the emergency room. They passed the debt for my hospital visit to a debt collector to charge me. I can't work because I had an eye operation in December. Everyone in my house has gotten COVID. I thank God that I survived COVID because I have an underlying condition.

My economy is ruined. I just got a job but when I tested positive for COVID, they paid me for the fifteen days that I worked but didn't give me my job back. Now, I cannot carry heavy things because of my eye surgery, and I can't work like before. I've been dragging this \$8,000 debt to the hospital from before I got COVID. I don't know what to do. I applied to Husky for them to help me with the debt but they rejected me. I am dealing with a debt collector that calls me at every moment. Now, I am not going to the doctor, only when it is extremely urgent, to avoid the high costs. I have cancelled many appointments because I don't have the money. When I made the appointment and I told them how much I earned, they still charged me as though I were the only person in my household. I have a family that I take care of. That appointment cost me \$60 , just for a consultation. It's not easy to pay this quantity. Thanks to my family and friends who have helped me pay for the recovery.

This would mean a lot. I have spent more than 10 years paying taxes with an Individual Tax ID Number. We are people that have suffered a lot.. I urge the committee and CT lawmakers to support S.B. 956 this session to expand high-quality, dependable, and affordable health care by expanding access to HUSKY medicaid for all members of the undocumented community.

Thank you for your time,
Taurino Jimenez, Semilla Collective