

**Written Testimony Presented Before the
Human Services Committee**
March 11th, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

By

Julio A. Leon, Student

UConn School of Social Work

S.B 956 - AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

Chair Abercrombie, Chair Moore, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank for the opportunity to testify before the committee in support of resolution S.B. No. 956. My name is Julio Leon, and I am a current student at the UConn School of Social Work. I am also a resident of Hartford.

This pandemic has confirmed and exposed the many disparities and inequities within the economic and health care system that affects low-income communities of color.

According to research done by the *New American Economy Research Fund* the problem is the following. In 2014, Connecticut immigrants contributed an estimated 1.8 billion dollars in state and local taxes, and 3.3 billion in federal taxes. Undocumented immigrants alone pay roughly 145 million dollars into state and local taxes every year, taxes that are then appropriated to fund Connecticut's HUSKY program. Yet, despite their contributions, many immigrant communities cannot access health coverage due to HUSKY's limiting eligibility rules for immigrants. In turn, tens of thousands of families and individuals with no coverage cannot receive the proper care and treatment they deserve- this is a massive public health concern. Expanding HUSKY's eligibility to be inclusive of all immigrants regardless of status will help equalize access to health care coverage and help reduce the uninsured rate in Connecticut.

Why should this bill be supported? healthcare is human right, preventative care will save money, and lastly people are waiting and in need of crucial support in these times that we are living in. Families are lacking the ability to afford healthcare and are getting into debt and many are uninsured. No one should have to worry about how they are going to afford their next medicine, doctors visit or life-threatening surgery.

Thank you for your time, and I urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 956

Sincerely,

Julio A Leon