



Legislative Testimony
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Written Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 956, An Act Providing Medical Assistance to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status, with Suggested Amendments

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Ranking Members Berthel and Case, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am the interim senior policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 956, An Act Providing Medical Assistance to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status, with a suggested amendment.

The ACLU-CT believes in equality for all people, no matter where they are from or what they have been subjected to in their past. Immigrants are contributing to our state in a multitude of ways and deserve to be respected and offered help when they need it. Medical care is a human right, so immigration status should have no impact on the ability to access healthcare. Senate Bill 956 recognizes and codifies that value.

Noncitizens are significantly more likely to be uninsured than citizens, with an estimated 45 percent of undocumented immigrants uninsured.¹ Children with at least one noncitizen parent are almost twice as likely to be uninsured as children with two citizen parents.² This could be a contributing factor to the low rate of healthcare utilization by undocumented people – who account for just 1.4 percent of the total medical expenditures in the U.S., even though they make up

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, Health Coverage of Immigrants (Feb. 15, 2019), *available at* <https://www.kff.org/disparities-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-of-immigrants/>.

²² *Id.*

approximately 5 percent of the population.³ Clearly, there is a gap between the healthcare needs of immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, and their healthcare access.

Senate Bill 956 is an important step to change these statistics. The bill could be strengthened even further, though, by including access to low-income parents and children under HUSKY A irrespective of immigration status. Adding in access for lower-income older people and people with disabilities of every immigration status is an important change, as well, to ensure that HUSKY healthcare truly is available to everyone who is otherwise eligible, regardless of their immigration status.

Healthcare is a right that should be afforded to all people in Connecticut. Immigrants contribute hugely to our state and should not be punished because of their legal status. Accordingly, the ACLU-CT supports Senate Bill 956, and encourages this Committee to support and strengthen the bill.

³ Courtney Hollands, "Do Immigrants Drain the U.S. Health-Care System?" Tufts Medicine Magazine (Winter2019), *available at* <https://sites.tufts.edu/medicine/winter-2019/do-immigrants-drain-the-u-s-health-care-system/>.