

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Committee on Human Services
March 11, 2021**

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

Dear Senator Marilyn Moore and Representative Catherine Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Annie McGovern and I am a student at Wesleyan University as well as an intern at NARAL Pro-Choice CT. I'm testifying today in strong support of S.B. 956, An Act Providing Medical Assistance to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status. While Connecticut is considered to be a relatively progressive state, there are many communities that are continually excluded from our policies. Connecticut houses a growing population of immigrants from a variety of countries and cultures that contribute to our state in innumerable and vital ways. It is our duty as a state and as compassionate neighbors to care for and protect all members of our community. Additionally, immigrants pay taxes that are then allocated to HUSKY, so they should absolutely have access to the benefits. In 2020 there were 120,000 undocumented immigrants living in CT, meaning that passing this bill could positively impact so many lives (<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-connecticut>).

Specifically as an intern at NARAL Pro-Choice CT, I support this issue because without appropriate health care coverage, immigrants are unable to access necessary medical care such as abortions. Although HUSKY only covers abortions that are deemed medically necessary by a physician, this service should be available to all residents of Connecticut.

If you don't pass this bill, you are upholding a major barrier to care. And barriers to care, as we know, don't eliminate the problem, but exacerbate it. Inaccessibility often forces people to make drastic and dangerous medical decisions, especially when it comes to abortions. People seeking abortions will simply turn elsewhere if they can't receive high quality, safe care. Moreover, lack of care can also induce the development of other physical and mental health issues that, without Medicaid, may be left unaddressed. Even if private health insurance is an option, many are unable to afford it. Regardless, immigrants should be provided the same benefits and opportunities as all other citizens that partake in our system. (See <https://www.gutmacher.org/news-release/2017/barriers-abortion-care-may-have-cumulative-negative-effects> for more information)

This IS a matter of reproductive justice. Access to health care, which includes access to abortion services, is a human right, so let's work together to provide Medicaid to all humans living in CT. To close, I support S.B. 956, with clear language to extend current HUSKY eligibility rules to all CT residents regardless of immigration status, and I ask the committee to do the same.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Annie McGovern