

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Stephany Melgar Montoya. I am a student from Stamford High School, I'm undocumented.

I stand in support of SB956: AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS, but with modifications. SB956 as currently written leaves out many in our immigrant community, it leaves out low-income parents and children under HUSKY A and low-income elderly and disabled folks under HUSKY C. I support modifying SB956 to include ALL CT residents that qualify under the full current HUSKY eligibility.

I am twenty years old, I have been living in Stamford for two years. I am a senior in Stamford High School. My parents and my brothers just arrived four months ago. We are from Peru, and coming was a great change in our lives. But everything is in search of a better future.

When I was little I was diagnosed with heart problems, these were a slightly large heart murmur, Wolf Parkinsons White Syndrome, and Ebstein Anomaly. I was always in checkups, electros, echocardiograms. When I was 11 years old, I had a cardiac catheterization to close the murmur in my heart and fortunately that murmur closed. But what affected me the most at that time was the Wolf Parkinsons White Syndrome, I had many tachycardias that I even ended up in the hospital, at the age of 15 I had an operation for Wolf Parkinsons White Syndrome, in Lima, the capital of my country, that operation was very expensive, my father paid only a small part and the rest was covered by my insurance, everything went well until after a few months that this syndrome reappeared, the tachycardias were no longer so strong but they told me that I should have to operate again At the age of 16, they operated on me again, but unfortunately it did not work because it reappeared. But in the check ups I did here, it appeared that the Wolf Parkinsons White Syndrome was no longer there. But now the doctor told me about the Ebstein Anomaly and how important it was that he operated on me or could I run some risk if the anomaly grew, I did not know this since in my country they had not told me, nor had they done some tests that here Yes. He told me that my Ebstein Anomaly was very peculiar, there were few cases like that, and he also explained that this operation was open heart and that the only places where he could do it were at Columbia Hospital NYC and at Yale-New Haven Hospital. When I found out I fell apart and was very scared, It was not only the fear if the operation is successful, but also the fear of how I could do that operation to me, I only have financial aid for Stamford and looking for some in those two places is very difficult since this operation is very expensive, and I cannot have HUSKY since I am undocumented and over 18, it has been almost a year and I still can't find any kind of help, I'm still looking.

My parents don't have insurance either, I was only able to get them financial help that covers only part of it. Fortunately my siblings can have HUSKY since they are under 18. My sister suffers from Anemia Pure Red Cell Aplasia, and thanks to the help of HUSKY she is being

treated at Yale-New Haven Hospital, our agony is that in three years when she turns 18, they take it away and it can no longer be attended there.

I believe that like my case, there are many similar or worse cases, where families, because they are undocumented, do not receive the necessary help in health. And that desperation of not knowing what to do, where to seek help, feeling somehow alone is horrible. That is why by giving the HUSKY to immigrants there would be a great help and support for us, since this is not about what country you are from, it is rather a support between humans, where one helps the other in difficult and delicate moments. Health is a fundamental right, but sometimes it is very expensive and not very accessible, especially for the immigrants, who come from another country, without much budget or a good job.

I support S.B. No 956 with the modifications above, and hope the committee will make those changes.

Thank you for your time,
Stephany Melgar Montoya