



*1400 members in 12 shoreline and surrounding towns
safeguarding fundamental human rights through grassroots action*

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 956
AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS
WITH AMENDMENTS**

Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible (CTSI) is a non-partisan grass roots organization and a member of the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance. Our mission includes a strong commitment to creating a more just society by addressing systemic injustice and racism. To that end, our Immigration & Refugee Action Team defends the human and civil rights of immigrants in a broad spectrum of contexts which ranges from supporting specific families threatened by deportation to promoting laws that embody equitable principles and policies.

One of the most fundamental human rights is the right to health care. However, as Committee members are well aware, people who are undocumented do not have the options to enroll in, or purchase, healthcare insurance that are available to everyone else. While we support S.B. 956 as a step in the right direction, we note that, if enacted, significant gaps in coverage would remain. Therefore, we strongly urge you to amend the bill to further expand coverage to anyone, regardless of immigration status, who would be eligible under HUSKY A (low-income parents/caretakers and children) and HUSKY C (seniors and people with disabilities).

While denying healthcare to human beings is unethical in the best of times, it is especially cruel and irresponsible during the pandemic. Many undocumented workers kept our state going when the pandemic was at its worst. [As essential workers](#), they risked their lives and the health of their families. Connecticut's use of Emergency Medicaid funds to cover testing and treatment of COVID-19 regardless of residents' immigration status wasn't even sufficient to address medical issues relating to COVID-19 [because of its extremely narrow scope](#).

In a recent [letter](#), hundreds of health care providers urged the expansion of HUSKY to all residents regardless of immigration status. Providers, advocates, and community members have repeatedly described the dire consequences of foregoing healthcare, which not only results in acute crises and death but also creates and exacerbates chronic health conditions, as well as severely impacting families' financial well-being.

Besides the compelling humanitarian and practical reasons why this bill should be enacted into law, it is grossly unfair that a community that pays millions of dollars in state and local taxes each year, some of which are allocated to fund HUSKY, does not have the same rights as other taxpayers. (According to the [American Immigration Council](#), "Undocumented immigrants in Connecticut paid an estimated \$335.4 million in federal taxes and \$197.4 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2018.) People who contribute so much to our state welfare should not be discriminated against because of their immigration status.

It is also worth pointing out that expanding HUSKY to undocumented immigrants benefits everyone in the state by protecting our collective public health, as well as by lowering uncompensated care costs that otherwise would be assumed by both the private and public sectors.

We strongly urge the Committee to amend S.B. 956 as proposed and give the amended bill a favorable report.

Jane Nadel

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