

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. No. 956**  
AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS  
OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

Kristin Reese, MD  
March 11, 2021

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Connecticut General Assembly Human Services Committee:

My name is Kristin Reese, and I am a physician specializing in Pediatrics at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital. This testimony reflects my own personal opinion, and does not reflect the opinion of Yale University, or Yale New Haven Children's Hospital.

As a resident of New Haven, CT and a Pediatrician, I strongly **SUPPORT S.B. No. 956**- "An Act Providing Medical Assistance to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status."

Healthcare is a human right, and no person should be denied that right due to an inability to pay or immigration status. Undocumented residents in CT are currently unable to access any healthcare coverage. They are prohibited from buying into Access Health CT, are not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare, and private insurance companies are either too costly, or refuse applications from undocumented individuals. **S.B. 956**, with modifications to include low-income parents and children under HUSKY A and low-income elderly and disabled adults under HUSKY C, would ensure that all children and their families, regardless of immigration status, would be eligible for health insurance coverage.

For undocumented children, lack of health insurance can lead to poor health outcomes. As a Pediatrician, I see kids at regularly scheduled intervals to ensure proper growth and development; to ensure common childhood diseases such as asthma and diabetes are being managed appropriately; to check in on mental health. Uninsured children are much less likely to get necessary medical care, preventive care, or timely treatment for illness or injuries. Lack of access has broad implications: healthcare affects school performance, lifelong health, and future earning potential.

Last year I took care of an undocumented child for many months in the children's hospital. Although his parents were both undocumented immigrants, and worked full-time, they did not have health insurance. This child's illness was so severe, he required a lengthy stay in the Pediatric ICU. Thankfully, he recovered. However, due to his lengthy illness, he had residual impairments that required outpatient care at a rehabilitation facility. Because the family did not have health insurance, this child spent many unnecessary months in the hospital, instead of being able to go home with services that would optimize his recovery.

We must do better for our kids in CT. Six states, including New York and Massachusetts, have expanded their programs to cover all income-eligible children regardless of immigration status. Every child should have the right to access health care and look forward to a safe, healthy, productive future.

I support **S.B. No 956** and hope the committee will vote favorably.

Thank you for your time,  
Kristin Reese, MD

