

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly

My name is Nakeitha Rose, I am a resident of Bridgeport Connecticut.

I stand in support of SB956: AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. However with modifications SB965 as currently written leaves out many of our low income parents and children under HUSKY A and low income elderly and disabled folks under HUSKY C. I support modifying SB965 to include ALL CT residents that qualify under the full current HUSKY eligibility.

I'm originally from Nassau, Bahamas and my mother sent me and my twin sister to the U.S. at the age of 6 to visit my grandmother whom herself was undocumented. I've been living in the U.S. since August of 83 or 84 I don't really remember, but our birthday is in November and that was only a few months away from when we arrived to the states. Also the president at that time was Ronald Reagan.

My grandmother was from Spanish Town, Jamaica and resided in Norwalk, CT with her son (my uncle) at that time. We started school at Tracey Elementary in Norwalk CT. My first taste of Connecticut winter made me cry because I didn't own a pair of gloves. My grandmother was a sweet woman and she was also very strict. My childhood was a rough.

During my junior and high school years I lived in Bridgeport, it wasn't until my high school years that became homeless as a teenager, at some point my grandmother just stopped caring and wasn't letting me in the house. Some days I stayed at a friend's house and some days I slept outside. During my sophomore summer vacation on August 13th of 95 I was staying with a friend one day we decided to hang out on the back porch and after awhile the porch collapsed and I was instantly paralyzed from the waist down, leaving me to live a life as T4 paraplegic at the age of 17.

Because I was under age, undocumented and now disabled I wasn't sure how I was going to cope with all of that. I didn't have medical insurance after getting discharged from the hospital. I was sent to live with a family member in Florida and was still without healthcare for many many years. Financially it took a toll on my loved ones not to mention added more stress.

I ended up moving back to Connecticut in 2004 to live with my Twin and her 3 kids. My sister was able to get situated because of her American born children, but I was still struggling as an undocumented immigrant. It wasn't until 2015 that I came across a nonprofit organization called Access Independence located in Stratford, CT and was introduced to a woman who helped advocate for myself. I applied and was eligible for HUSKY D I've had medical insurance ever since.

This bill would help benefit A LOT of people in my community who are undocumented immigrants because as long as they're in this country 5 years or more and have a valid passport they should be more than eligible. That's one of the requirements after all because that's how I was able to mine.

I can't stress how grateful i am for having my HUSKY D healthcare coverage. It has allowed me to not only see a doctor regularly but I get the proper medical equipment, supplies and medications and that helps by giving me a chance to live a better quality of life with a spinal cord injury. Not having healthcare coverage regardless of income or legal status isn't right and we should try to work on changing that for ALL CT residents not just some.

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

Thank you for allowing me to use my voice,

Nakeitha M. Rose