

**Testimony for S.B. No. 956: “AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS”**

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

My name is Nichole Roxas MD MPH, and I am a licensed resident physician at Yale University and a resident of New Haven. I stand in support of S.B. No. 956: “AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS,” with clear language that extends eligibility to all HUSKY programs to all CT residents, regardless of immigration status.

In terms of my qualifications, I am a licensed physician. I earned a Bachelor of Arts from New York University in 2013, a Master of Public Health from Harvard in 2017 and a Doctor of Medicine from University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry in 2018. I am completing my Adult Psychiatry residency at Yale. As part of my postgraduate education, I completed further training in Internal Medicine and Neurology at Yale New Haven Hospital and the West Haven Veterans Affairs Hospital. I am currently practicing at several sites, including the Connecticut Mental Health Center, where I care for adults with a variety of psychiatric and medical diagnoses, regardless of insurance or immigration status.

During my training, I participated in caring for a mother who was undocumented. She was in her late 30s and her chief concern was suicidal ideation. On chart review, I realized that she was spending her birthday here in the emergency department with us. She wept as she shared how her partner had cheated on her, and how she was feeling depressed and suicidal under the stress of heartbreak. Furthermore, he left her, and so she rose up to be the sole provider for their children. She was juggling multiple cleaning or caretaking jobs to pay rent, put food on the table, and help them with homework. She described additional depressive symptoms of fatigue, decreased appetite, and insomnia. Moreover, she had no health insurance. Thus, she did not have access to and could not afford to pay for healthcare services that would help her heal. Finally, her well-founded fears of deportation and being separated from her children exacerbated her symptoms. Together, all these different types of stress added up and were taking a toll on her health and well-being. And yet, she persisted to be the best mother she could be for her children. They were her reasons for living. She is just one example of the millions of undocumented immigrants in our state who pay roughly 145 million dollars into our state and local taxes every year, and yet are excluded from accessing Medicaid due to their immigration status. Passing this S. B. No. 956 legislation would provide necessary structural support to assist her in getting her basic needs met as a human being. It would set her up to succeed and be the best mother she can be. It would help me be the best healer I can be because it would enable me to do my job of connecting and providing her with all the resources and treatment modalities that are clinically indicated, regardless of her insurance or immigration status.

In conclusion, I support S.B. No 956, with clear language to extend current HUSKY eligibility rules to all CT residents, regardless of immigration status, and I strongly urge the committee to support this vital legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Nichole Roxas MD MPH