

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 Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is *Alondra Vazquez Lopez*, I am a student who has lived in the city of *New Haven* for the past four years.

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 originally from California, a state which recently became the first to offer healthcare to all undocumented immigrants regardless of age. I believe Connecticut can follow in such steps by amending SB956. I am currently a student at Yale University and have been able to connect to the New Haven and Fair Haven community throughout my years at school. During my time here I have met and worked alongside community peers in pursuit of justice and rights for undocumented immigrants. Connecticut and California both have large immigrant communities and I have been lucky enough to meet and identify with the Latinx immigrant community in CT. In my time here I've recognized that the undocumented immigrant community shares the same struggles, culture, and fight as the one we do across the country. In this fight we ask that simple human rights be met for all of the state's residents regardless of migratory status.

As a person who comes from a mixed-status family I know first-hand how difficult it is to have a loved one who does not have access to proper medical care and suffers from an illness. As a citizen myself I did not understand why my parents could not have access to medical care if they too lived and contributed to the economy of the U.S. Even so, without considering the billions in economic contribution that undocumented immigrants provide to our states, access to healthcare is a human right. Healthcare ensures and allows individuals and families to live full, robust, and productive lives with dignity. I have a parent who suffers from several chronic conditions, among them lupus, and unfortunately in the past before California passed new legislation, they were not able to receive medical treatment or afford medication. In situations of urgent care, like when they had suffered a spinal injury because of work they did not go to the doctor because it was economically out of reach. In these situations my family had often turned to home remedies and alternative medicine that although helpful for immediate pain did not address the issue and prolonged the recovery process. Other families should not have to go through the same situations. Being medically vulnerable also exposes individuals and families to other vulnerabilities, like it did to my own family, such as financial and food insecurity (untreated injuries caused lack of employment) and heightened risk of not recovering fully. The state of Connecticut should change and pass legislation that allows all people to be protected and cared for so they too do not have to go through difficult situations.

SB956 would allow undocumented immigrant communities to address their health concerns, live healthy lives, and access help in moments of emergency. Given the recent implementation of the bill in California I know all of my family members will now have the safety net of healthcare. As a

Latina from a low-income family such legislation will tremendously help the lives of my loved ones by allowing them to access medication and receive care so they can go on with their lives while addressing their conditions. I believe the undocumented immigrant community of Connecticut should also have this sense of security. Low-income undocumented communities face several vulnerabilities, healthcare is a human right that should not be up to question.

I support S.B. No 956 with the modifications above, and hope the committee will make those changes taking into consideration the entirety of its population including the undocumented.

Thank you for your time,

Alondra Vazquez Lopez

Member of Connecticut Students for a Dream