



Connecticut Students for a Dream

Empower. Educate. Advocate.

www.CT4aDream.org

Testimony to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee of the CT Legislature

Testimony in support of S.B.842

February 9th, 2021

Honorable Chairs and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

We, Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D), strongly call on the members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee to pass S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care In Connecticut, which would make health care equitable, dependable, and affordable by creating new public options for health insurance in our state.

C4D is a statewide, youth-led network that fights for the rights of undocumented youth and their families. We do this through community organizing, leadership development, and advocacy. We are proud to be the only organization in Connecticut that is led by and for immigrant youth directly impacted by the issues we seek to address.

We testify today because our immigrant communities are living under difficult and challenging times in Connecticut and in the rest of the country. To us, living unafraid means our immigrant communities have access to safe, accessible, and affordable healthcare, health insurance, and health coverage, that does not discriminate on the basis of status. The Public Options Bill would provide one avenue for immigrants in CT to get access to healthcare. . .

Currently, undocumented individuals are heavily barred from accessing health insurance. According to the US Census, an estimated 187,000 individuals were uninsured in Connecticut in 2018, which is 5.3% of people in our state. However, uninsured rates for immigrant communities are drastically higher. Data reported by the Migrant Policy Institute (MPI) estimates 30.1% of foreign-born, non-citizens in Connecticut have no health care coverage¹, an estimated 159,600 individuals. In the undocumented community that number goes up to an estimated 52% uninsured rate consisting of approximately 53,000 uninsured individuals in Connecticut².

It's clear that immigrant communities across the state are suffering from lack of health care coverage. An inability to access insurance today translates to an inability to access care, and an inability to access care causes people's health issues to develop into more serious, harmful life-threatening conditions. That is why we believe it is imperative for the Insurance and Real Estate Committee to pass this bill to give access to healthcare to immigrant communities regardless of immigration status.

¹ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/income/CT#>

² <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/CT>



Connecticut Students for a Dream

Empower. Educate. Advocate.

www.CT4aDream.org

C4D is particularly concerned with this bill as it will give our undocumented community a pathway to get healthcare insurance and seek the care they need before it is too late. Time and time again we see our community members unable to afford preventative and specialized healthcare, that when it comes to a point that they can not delay their check-ups/injuries any longer, they turn to the emergency room where the cost is higher. This cycle of fear and uncertainty around our health needs has to stop. And now more than ever it is important to create access to healthcare to our community, which is vulnerable to this pandemic.

This bill will open up more options for people to BUY into health insurance: such as small business and nonprofit employers, and individuals and undocumented immigrants who cannot purchase into the Affordable Healthcare Act exchange and who are not eligible for Medicaid. Healthcare is a human right and no member of our community should have to go through so many hurdles to have access to doctors or life saving medicine.

We strongly stand in support of S.B. 842 and urge the Committee to vote favorably this session to expand high-quality, dependable, and affordable health care by creating new public options for health insurance.

Thank you, and we hope this committee listens to the countless individuals, families, groups, and organizations advocating for this bill.

On behalf of the C4D community,

Katia Daley

CT Students for a Dream

www.ct4adream.org