

Dear Members of Insurance and Real Estate of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Taurino Ignacio Jiménez and I am from New Haven, Connecticut. I am involved with the Semilla Collective, and I support S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care In Connecticut.

This year, I tested positive for COVID and still had to pay bills. I received many calls from health clinics to pay. I also have diabetes which has affected my vision, and I owe \$8,000 for an earlier stay in the emergency room. They passed the debt for my hospital visit to a debt collector to charge me. I can't work because I had an eye operation in December. Everyone in my house has gotten COVID. I thank God that I survived COVID because I have an underlying condition.

My economy is ruined. I just got a job but when I tested positive for COVID, they paid me for the fifteen days that I worked but didn't give me my job back. Now, I cannot carry heavy things because of my eye surgery, and I can't work like before. I've been dragging this \$8,000 debt to the hospital from before I got COVID. I don't know what to do.

I applied to Husky for them to help me with the debt but they rejected me. I am dealing with a debt collector that calls me at every moment. Now, I am not going to the doctor, only when it is extremely urgent, to avoid the high costs. I have cancelled many appointments because I don't have the money. When I made the appointment and I told them how much I earned, they still charged me as though I were the only person in my household. I have a family that I take care of. That appointment cost me \$60 , just for a consultation. It's not easy to pay this quantity. Thanks to my family and friends who have helped me pay for the recovery.

This would mean a lot. I have spent more than 10 years paying taxes with an Individual Tax ID Number. We are people that have suffered a lot. I urge the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers to support S.B. 842 this session to expand high-quality, dependable, and affordable health care by creating new public options for health insurance.

Thank you for your time,  
Taurino Ignacio Jiménez, Semilla Collective