

Make the Road Connecticut
360 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT



February 8, 2021,

Insurance and Real State Committee Public Hearing

Letter of Support for S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut

Dear Members of the Insurance and Real State Committee of Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Barbara Lopez and I am the Director of Make the Road Connecticut. Make the Road Connecticut is a community based organization that builds power of immigrants and low-income Latinx communities. We believe our community deserves to live with dignity and to be seen for their humanity, regardless of their citizenship status, gender, race, class, sexuality or religion. We do this through community organizing, providing legal/survival services, developing leaders, and supporting policy innovation. Our priorities issues are fighting for economic justice, education equity, and immigration reform. Our member base consists of over 1,000 members. Today, I am writing this letter of support on behalf of our members. We support S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut.

S.B. 842 will make health care equitable, dependable, and affordable by creating new public options for health insurance in our state. Our members are the backbones of their communities in Bridgeport and Hartford. We hear countless stories of our members working in conditions that are subpar, lack of preventative care that leads them to the emergency rooms and the discrimination they face for not speaking the English language and the various times their rights were violated for this reason. Our members faced these barriers before the pandemic. Presently, during this global pandemic we have seen first hand the widening of the health disparities in our state. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the overall health of our member's family unit and community. Most of our members are essential workers: they clean offices/schools/gyms/hotels, nannies, landscapers in the Summer, snow cleaner in the Winter, work in farms, and work in construction. The loss of jobs among people of color has led to a health insurance loss that is approximately double across the US with immigrant and Latinx populations experiencing the most disproportionate impacts. Our member's situation is precarious. They live day to day. That's why a strong public option must include coverage for all undocumented residents in CT, and ensure individual options on the health exchange are affordable for economically marginalized people.

Our members believe that healthcare is a human right. However, undocumented immigrants are barred from accessing health coverage. As a result, they cannot seek the proper health care they need. A public option should provide undocumented immigrants with the same access as everyone else. We need to make this a public priority and close the economic inequalities in our state. We urge the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers to support S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut to give our families a fair chance to live with dignity, justice and health.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Lopez', is positioned below the text 'Thank you for your time,'.

Barbara Lopez, Director of **Make the Road Connecticut**