

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

My name is Yenimar Cortes Morales I am from New Haven , Connecticut and one of the many undocumented immigrants that live in CT. I am part of Connecticut Students for a Dream, a statewide youth- led network that fights for the rights of undocumented immigrant families and youth in the state of connecticut. I support S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care In Connecticut because there is an ongoing healthcare crisis in this country and in particular Connecticut and this legislation can help.

S.B. 842 will make health care equitable, dependable, and affordable by creating new public options for health insurance in our state.

This legislation will help make sure many people in CT but I specifically want to highlight the part of the legislation where it creates new health insurance options for undocumented individuals and families who are currently shut out of the health care market. I AM URGING THAT THIS PART OF THE LEGISLATION IS NOT LEFT OUT BECAUSE OUR UNDOCUMENTED COMMUNITY DESERVES HEALTHCARE.

Growing up undocumented in this country has been a challenge for many reasons but one of the main challenges was not having access to healthcare. My whole life I have avoided going to the doctors due to the cost and only have gone when pain or illness becomes serious. My mother would have to pay out of pocket everytime we would go to our local clinic for simple things like a physical and every time I would have to watch her become nervous that she didn't have enough money. I have watched countless family members get sick with conditions that could have been prevented with preventative healthcare. We live in fear of seeking help because of the huge price tag that comes with it. This legislation will make a change in that and will help our community be able to afford healthcare. I urge you to think about your families that probably have secure health insurance, imagine if they did not? It will bring an everyday fear of losing them due to lack of healthcare. This is something you all have the power to change.

I also want to acknowledge that healthcare is a racial issue. Before the pandemic, Connecticut's overall uninsured rate was 5.3%, but it reached 6.8% for Black residents and 13.1% for Hispanic or Latino residents. Today, the pandemic is sickening and killing Black, Latino and Native Americans at higher rates than whites, reflecting and compounding health care disparities that have long gone unaddressed. This plan seeks to address the lack of racial equity in our system by expanding access to care. YOU ALL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO CHANGE THIS, BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY.

I really 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 and to not leave out undocuemented immigrants from this legislation.

Thank you for your time,

Yenimar Cortes Morales, Connecticut Students for a Dream