

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

My name is Katherine Villeda and I am from Stamford, Connecticut. I am a Community Organizer within the reproductive health and rights, and immigrant rights communities. I stand in support of SB 346: *An Act Concerning Public Options For Health Care In Connecticut*.

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. I urge the committee to make sure that you make this Public Option as inclusive as possible, and available to all CT's residents regardless of immigration status.

As the daughter of formerly undocumented parents, I know first hand what it is like for my immediate family to go over 10 years without seeing a health care provider because lack of access to health insurance and the fears of ending up with medical debt. The public option could allow for a middle ground to exist between the public health insurance plans that immigrants often times do not qualify for due to their status, and private health insurance plans that often times are too expensive to afford. I applaud this bill and the intentionality behind it. This bill gives Connecticut a step forward in being inclusive of all Connecticut residents, including immigrants regardless of status, to have more options to more affordable health insurance options.

I support SB346 and hope the committee will vote favorably with necessary changes needed to make it as inclusive as possible.

Thank you for your time,  
Katherine Villeda  
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