

Dear Chairs Osten and Walker, Vice Chairs Hartley and Dathan, Ranking Members Miner and France, and members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Timothy Gabriele. I am a resident of North Haven, CT and I am testifying to communicate my concerns on HB 6439, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, and Making Appropriations Therefor.

We're entering a period of fiscal crisis, not just broadly for the state of Connecticut and its institutions, but the working families and individuals that comprise Connecticut's beating heart. After the public health emergencies of the past year, our interconnectedness and interdependence have been laid bare. We cannot afford to have any more residents lose health coverage and we certainly cannot afford to lose any more of our residents because of lost health coverage. Expanding Medicaid coverage through Husky A is vital to showing our most vulnerable populations that their lives have dignity and merit and their success is a priority to us.

I urge this committee to expand Husky A and D limits to cover to at least 201% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) so that folks at the lower end of the income spectrum are not left scrambling for options, rationing medication, or skipping important care visits. Current individuals applying for Husky D would not even qualify since the threshold is below the state minimum wage for an individual working full-time. These programs should be open to all eligible residents of Connecticut, including immigrant populations, regardless of where that are at in the naturalization process.

As vital as these changes are, they are not nearly enough. We need to look into ending the process of means-testing healthcare and instead treat it as a human right that should be guaranteed to every single person. The best long-term solution to an issue like this would be for our national representatives to get on board in sponsoring The Medicare for All Act of 2021 when it is introduced, an act which would transition the United States to a single-payer national healthcare system which would be top-of-class in the entire world. In the absence of this committee's power to render that decision for our national representatives, improvements to the current system, such as expansion of Husky access to 201% FPL for working families trapped by Connecticut's high cost of living and the exorbitant cost of private, for-profit healthcare, are vital ensuring that the tool of government is being used to enhance and protect the lives of its most vulnerable.

I hope the committee and Connecticut lawmakers agree that HB 6439 should be amended to provide greater access to care. I thank the committee for their time.

Sincerely,
Timothy Gabriele
North Haven, CT