

Human Services Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6616

AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF HUSKY HEALTH BENEFITS TO
Title: THOSE INELIGIBLE DUE TO IMMIGRATION STATUS.

Vote Date: 3/2/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 2/14/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

There are many undocumented residents of Connecticut who are lacking the basic essential healthcare because they are not eligible for health insurance. This population has faced financial struggles putting themselves in debt just for basic care. They prolong the start of treatment or treat themselves at home for serious medical conditions because they cannot afford to go to the doctor. It is a right for non-legal resident children to have access to the public system, so why is it not their right to have health coverage as their peers. This bill will assist this population by expanding HUSKY benefits to those people who are currently ineligible because of immigration status.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Social Services (DSS), Medicaid Director, William Gui Woolston; opposes bill stating while they appreciate the bill's intent to extend medical coverage to a greater swath of the uninsured population within the state, the estimate cost would be at least \$15 million annually. It is stated the state provides medical coverage to non-citizen residents an option under the federal law Medicaid and CHIP coverage to lawfully present non-citizen residents under the age of 21. It is stated that during the 2021 legislative session, state-funded medical assistance equivalent to HUSKY, was established with an effective date of January 1, 2023 for non-citizen children 8 years of age or younger. It is also stated that last legislative session, the program expanded to cover children 12 years of age or younger effective January 1, 2023 and guaranteed continuing coverage until age 19 for children who otherwise remained eligible. It is suggested that since DSS has only begun to provide coverage as of January 1, 2023, DSS has not had the opportunity to evaluate the

effectiveness of the program and the cost to the state. It is stated any further expansion of this program is premature and would come with a cost not contemplated in the Governor's proposed bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

The following people have submitted testimony in support of this bill. It is stated that healthcare is a human right for all to have medical coverage. It is stated providing medical coverage to this specific population would advance health equity in our state while also being fiscally prudent. It is also stated there are long term cost savings in providing care to this population because it provides an opportunity for them to access care sooner leading to better long-term health outcomes. It is suggested that most of the public supports expanding of HUSKY access to this population and that our communities will not be penalized for utilizing HUSKY.

Connecticut General Assembly, President Pro Tempe, Senator Martin Looney

Connecticut General Assembly, State Senator, Derek Slap

Connecticut General Assembly, State Representative, Amy Morrin Bello

Connecticut General Assembly, State Representative, David Michel

Connecticut General Assembly, State Representative, Kate Farrar

City of New Haven, Mayor, Justin Elicker

Town of Manchester, Deputy Mayor, Sarah Jones

A Better Connecticut Institute (ABCI), Executive Director, Kim Forte

The Alliance Voice of Community Nonprofits, Director of Government Relations, Ben Shaiken

The Arc of Connecticut, Director of Advocacy, Carol Scully

American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT), Policy Counsel, Jess Zaccagnino

Black and Brown United In Action

Bridgeport Generation Now

Building One Community, Executive Director, Anka Badurin

Center for Children's Advocacy, Deputy Director, Jay Sicklick

Center for Latino Progress, Coordinator, Jay Stange

Clifford Beers Community Health Partners, CEO, Alice Forrester

Community Health Center Association of Connecticut, Interim CEO, Katherine Yacavone

Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, Co-Chair, Janet Bauer

Comunidades Sin Fronteras, Executive Director, Carmen Lanche

Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO)

Connecticut AFL-CIO, President, Ed Hawthorne

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), Director of Public Policy and

Communications, Liza Andrews

Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG), Associate Director, Liz Dupont-Diehl

Connecticut Communist Party USA, Chair, Joelle Fishmen

Connecticut Hospital Association

Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc. (CIFIC), CEO and President, Katherine McKeon

Connecticut #insulin4all, Chapter Leader, Kristen Whitney-Daniels

Connecticut Legal Rights (CLRP), Executive Director, Kathleen Flaherty

Connecticut Oral Health Initiative, Inc (COHI), Executive Director, TJ Clarke

Connecticut Students for a Dream

Connecticut Voices for Children, Local Strategies Deputy Director, Nick Teeling

Connecticut Worker Center, President, Nelli Jara;
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
Connecticut Working Families Power, State Director, Sarah Ganong
CT Associations of School Based Health Centers (CASBHC), Executive Director, Melanie Wilde-Lane
CT Citizen Action Group, Communications Coordinator, Helen Humphreys
CT Immigrant and Refugee Coalition, Executive Director, Robert Fishman
CT Institute For Communities, Inc.(CIDC), Program Manager, Melanie Bonjour
Disability Rights CT, Litigation Attorney, Sheldon Toubman
El Pueblo Unido, Executive Director, Andres Garcia
Fair Haven Community HealthCare, VP Clinical Affairs, Benjamin Oldfeild
First Choice Health Centers, President and CEO, Jeffrey Steele
First Church of Christ in Hartford (Center Church), Reverend, Elizabeth Arulampalam;
Generations Family Health Center, CEO, Melissa Meyers
Greater Hartford Action Alliance, Jane Torrey
Hartford Deportation Defense, Member, Porfirio Gonzalez Mazariegos
HAVEN Free Clinic
Hispanic Federation, New England Regional Director, Yanidsi Velez
Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services, Executive Director, Chris George
Interfaith Community Healthcare, President and CEO, Kimberly Beauregard
Jewish Community Relations Council
Make the Road CT, Development Director, Mary Elizabeth Smith
Manos Unidas/UACT, Member, Maria Anrrango
National Association of Social Worker, Executive Director, Stephen Wanczyk
New Britain Racial Justice Coalition, Executive Director, Alicia Strong
New CT Farmer Alliance, Coordinator, Mary Claire Whelan
New Haven Federation of Teachers, President, Leslie Blatteau
Nosotros CT, Executive Director, Carla Esquivel
Optimus Healthcare, CEO, Karen Daley
Planned Parenthood, Vice President, Gretchen Raffa
Pro-Choice Connecticut, State Director, Liz Gustafon
Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education (RACCE), Executive Director, Robbie Goodrich;
Recovery for All, Director, Puya Gerami
Social Welfare Action Alliance (SWAA), Coordinating Committee, Maggie Goodwin
Stamford Health, President, Kathleen Silard
UCONN Immigrant Health, Director, Susan Levine
Union Action Connecticut, Executive Director, Mark Kosnoff
Wheeler Clinic, President and CEO, Sabrina Trocchi
1199NE-SEIU Healthcare, President, Rob Baril
32BJ-SEIU, Vice President, Rochelle Palache

562 Connecticut Residents have submitted testimony in support of this bill. It is stated it that many undocumented families struggle without having medical coverage and the experience they have obtaining basic care without putting them into debt. It is stated if Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving, and growing workforce, then Connecticut must ensure that all have access to health coverage.

5 people submitted testimony anonymously in support of this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Republican Assembly, President, Anne Manusky; opposes this bill stating that providing health insurance to illegal immigrants is a violation of American values. It is stated that health is not a right and this bill would take funds away from taxpayers and give them to illegal immigrants.

Connecticut Resident, Hsuan-Hui Wang; opposes this bill stating that having to go through the process to become a legal immigrant and going through many visa applications, it is not right that health coverage is given to those who are not legal residents and not paying taxes to the state, therefore should not receive benefits from the state.

Connecticut Resident, Linda Dalessio; does not support this bill stating there is currently a healthcare crisis in Connecticut and the United States and since we are unable to take care of the American citizens, why are we proposing a bill allowing illegal immigrants medical coverage.

Kathleen Misset; opposes this bill stating that expanding HUSKY coverage for those ineligible due to immigration status would be a huge cost to taxpayers and would attract more undocumented immigrants to come to Connecticut.

George Norman; opposes this bill stating the state of Connecticut is superseding the federal government by providing benefits to undocumented immigrants.

1 person submitted testimony anonymously in opposition of this bill.

Reported by: Kelly Houston

Date: 03/16/2023