



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Favor with Amendments of SB 365: Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)

To: Senator Melony Griffith, Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee
From: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate, Immigration,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
February 15, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of SB 365, Health Insurance – Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program (Access to Care Act).

I encourage you to vote in favor of this bill.

Despite significant contributions to the national and Maryland economies -- income taxes, Social Security and Medicare FICA contributions in excess of \$4 billion annually, working in essential jobs, particularly during the pandemic -- our undocumented immigrant neighbors, many of whom would otherwise qualify for Medicaid, are currently ineligible, thus making them and their families susceptible to illnesses and diseases that in the long run without care may threaten our public safety. We can begin to correct this inequity by ensuring that our immigrant neighbors have access to health insurance provided via the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, non-citizens are significantly more likely than citizens to be uninsured. In 2019, among the non-elderly population, 25% of lawfully present immigrants and more than four in ten (46%) undocumented immigrants were uninsured compared to less than one in ten (9%) citizens. Among citizen children, those with at least one non-citizen parent are more likely to be uninsured compared to those with citizen parents (9% vs. 5%).

Access to affordable health care, particularly as the pandemic demonstrated, is a right not to be denied because of immigration status. The health of all of us, in all our communities is at stake.

I share my faith with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists in Maryland who are called to promote and affirm justice, equity and compassion in human relations and as such, I urge you to provide equitable access to health care for all Marylanders, including our immigrant neighbors by voting in favor of SB 365.

Thank you.

For the purposes of equity, the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland supports an amendment that ensures newly qualified individuals will receive the same subsidy rate as all other individuals covered under the Affordable Care Act.

Sources:

American Immigration Council,

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maryland>

Kaiser Family Foundation

