



HOWARD COUNTY COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 365, WITH CLARIFICATION

Qualified Resident Enrolment Program (Access to Care Act)

Dear Senator Lam and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 365, Access to Care Act. I am a member of the Executive Committee of the Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice; HCCIJ is a large, broad based coalition of grass roots religious and civic organizations supporting justice for immigrants. I am a voter, an immigrant and a veteran (mos. medic). I support passage of SB 365.

SB 365 assures that undocumented immigrant residents that qualify for subsidies under the Maryland Health Exchange, if not for their immigration status, can participate in this critical program. We are talking about an estimated 125,000 souls that have no access to regular medical care through their employer or other means and no access to subsidized health care because their status as undocumented. That is a worthy population, employed, paying taxes and raising families. Lack of access to care hurts families. Moreover, people lacking systematic care go to emergency room, when in medical dire strait. That is a fiscally inefficient manner to attend to the medical needs of a population. For at least some of these patients, it ends up costing our state more than subsidizing their health insurance premiums. Denying regular medical care is an un-responsible way to create a quality society and a non-cost-effective manner to run our state. So, HCCIJ supports SB365. BUT, it is important that immigrants are offered the same health care insurance as is offered to other residents.

I support this bill, as long as it provides equitable care. Please pass this bill.

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