



faith. love. liberation.
fe. amor. Liberación.

Testimony in support of House Bill 363

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and Maryland Department of Health - Health Care Coverage for Undocumented Immigrants - Report

To: Hon. Jocelyn Pena-Melnyk, chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee

From: Jerry Kickenson, Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator, Congregation Action Network

Date: February 14, 2023

We are writing in **support of House Bill 363, Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and Maryland Department of Health - Health Care Coverage for Undocumented Immigrants - Report**, on behalf of the Congregation Action Network (CAN). The Congregation Action Network is a network of faith communities in Washington, DC, and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs acting in solidarity to end detention, deportation, profiling, and criminalization of immigrants and demanding and upholding justice, dignity, safety, and family unity. With over 75 congregations and a thousand members throughout the capital area, including over 25 congregations with thousands of members in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, we live our faith in advocacy for and solidarity with our immigrant neighbors.

As people of faith committed to justice and compassion for immigrants, we adhere to the sacred texts of most major faiths that call for welcoming the stranger and treating each other with love, dignity, respect, and compassion. We believe in liberation and that immigrant families should be treated fairly and have the same access to programs and services as all Maryland residents.

HB363 will direct the state to study and report on options for expanding access to several state health programs to all Maryland residents, regardless of their immigration status, so that all Marylanders have access to adequate health care.

Immigrants in our state have the same right to health care as all of us. Many work in front line occupations, and many supported the rest of us through the worst of the Covid pandemic. We should not deny them, solely on the basis of their immigration status, access to health care or the insurance coverage that can help provide that access.

We respectfully urge you to reach a **favorable** report for HB363. It is a first step in providing equitable health care to all Maryland residents. It is the right and moral thing to do.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry Kickenson

Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator

Congregation Action Network

% 1701 Ladd Street

Silver Spring, MD 20902