



TESTIMONY IN TENTATIVE SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 363

MARYLAND HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE AND MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS - REPORT

Dear Delegate Cullison and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 363 - MARYLAND HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE AND MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS - REPORT. I am a member of the Executive Committee of the Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice; HCCIJ is a large, broad based coalition of faith based and civic organizations supporting justice for immigrants. Personally, I am a voter, an immigrant, and a retired attorney. I support HB363, but with concern. I wish your bill to clarify what is the role of the REPORT.

HB363 requests a report on the cost to the State and potential benefits designs for offering insurance to uninsured immigrants. It is hard to argue against seeking further information. But the information for implementation of benefits to immigrants basically already exists, if the benefits are to match the benefits already provided to other residents. Delegate Cullison, I admire your leadership on also proposing HB588. HB588 is aimed to also insure immigrants. Immigrants are members of our society. They benefit the State with their labor and taxes paid. Any emergency medical services they currently are able to obtain are costly to the State, as these emergency services are insufficient to maintain a healthy population. I support HB 363 as a general approach to gathering information. But it would be a mistake to reinvent the wheel, create benefits for immigrants that do not match the benefits for their fellow residents.

Respectfully yours,

Michael David

Columbia, MD 21044