



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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House Bill 363 - Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and Maryland Department of Health - Health Care Coverage for Undocumented Immigrants Health and Government Operations Committee - February 16, 2022 SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2023 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0363. This bill calls for a study to determine the need for the state of Maryland to provide healthcare coverage for undocumented immigrants. According to a March 2016 report by the Maryland Center on Economic Policy¹, "undocumented immigrants in Maryland pay an estimated \$308 million in state and local taxes per year." However, undocumented immigrants are not legally allowed to claim those taxes. To compound this, they are unable to access the healthcare benefits that their taxes pay for. The state of Maryland can and should do better, by extending healthcare for a vulnerable population that is generating hundreds of millions in tax revenues, often in difficult, low-wage jobs without benefits.

Additionally, Maryland's undocumented immigrants pay about 8.3 percent of their household incomes in taxes compared to the top 1 percent of taxpayers in Maryland who pay an average effective tax rate of 6.7 percent just.² Yet undocumented immigrants are denied access to affordable healthcare benefits. Equity demands that all taxpayers and everyone living in Maryland should have access to affordable and quality healthcare.

WDC believes healthcare is a right, regardless of status. A 2020 report by the American Immigration Council found that over 126,000 citizens living in Maryland live with at least one undocumented family member.³ Additionally, approximately 7 percent of children living in Maryland households who are U.S. citizens live with at least one undocumented family member.⁴ This means that an undocumented parent may not have access to healthcare to care for their child who is a U.S. citizen. In fact, U.S. citizen children who live with an undocumented parent are two times more likely to be uninsured than their counterparts who live in fully documented households. This does not fulfill our goal of equity and inclusion for all residents.

We should at least study the feasibility of providing healthcare coverage for all undocumented persons in the state. We ask the Maryland General Assembly to vote yes for Del. Cullison's House Bill 363 to develop a report outlining the options for affordable healthcare coverage for study the efficacy of providing healthcare coverage for State residents regardless of immigration status.

We ask for your support for HB0363 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Diana E. Conway
WDC President

Fatmata Barrie
WDC Advocacy Committee

¹ Undocumented Immigrants Pay Hundreds of Millions in State Taxes; Full Citizenship Would Benefit the State Even More. (2016, May 24).

<https://www.mdeconomy.org/undocumented-immigrants-pay-hundreds-of-millions-in-state-taxes-full-citizenship-would-benefit-the-state-even-more/>

² Ibid.

³ Fact Sheet: Immigrants in Maryland (2020, August 6). <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maryland>

⁴ Ibid.