



SB 728 - SUPPORT

John Payne - Liaison

Sanctuary DMV

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Health Insurance – Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program

(Access to Care Act)

Senate Finance Committee

February 28, 2022

Dear Chair Kelley and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is John Payne and I am a core organizer with Sanctuary DMV, which works with immigrants and immigrant communities throughout Maryland, Virginia, and DC, and I am here today to express our support on behalf for SB 728. Sanctuary DMV is an entirely volunteer organization dedicated to helping immigrants and immigrant communities build power, standing with individuals and their families during immigration proceedings, and advocating for legislation that will ensure immigrants are treated justly and with the respect they deserve.

Sanctuary DMV believes that health care is a human right and that all people, regardless of their status, should have access to quality and affordable health care. Since coming into law, the affordable care act has helped millions of Americans get the medical treatment they need. And while this has been a great step forward, our undocumented neighbors have been unjustly cut off from these benefits. Sanctuary DMV has seen first-hand the results of a system that unfairly excludes and punishes members of our community. We have worked with many individuals and families in economic hardships brought on by their status that struggle to pay rent, utilities, and medical bills. Many of these individuals do not work jobs that provide health insurance and are not able to afford the high costs of private care. This places a large economic burden on them and their families. They are often forced to make heart breaking decisions between going to a doctor or paying rent, buying groceries or filling a prescription. These are decisions that no one should have to make, but is one that many of our undocumented neighbors face with every single day.

This health care inequity has only grown in recent years due to the global pandemic. Many of our undocumented neighbors are not able to work from home on a regular basis. Instead, they have worked on the front lines of one of the worst global health crises in a century. The pandemic has also made work inconsistent and pay checks unreliable which has made it harder and harder for those without salaried work to pay for everyday needs. The COVID crisis has shown all of us how dangerous it can be when people are excluded from getting care and yet it is a cruel irony that those who have been most affected by it are still denied health care. This inequity in our health care system is not only a danger to our undocumented neighbors who cannot receive treatment, but to everyone. In order to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our communities we must ensure the health and safety of everyone in our communities.

The Access to Care is an important step to solving this inequity. By making sure that our documented neighbors are included under the American Care Act, we not only fulfilling our



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collective responsibility to one another but also strengthening the entire state. By giving all residents access to get affordable and quality medical care, Maryland will become a more healthy, equal, and just.

Sanctuary DMV urges a favorable report on SB 728.