



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 1035- Health Insurance – Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program (Access to Care Act)

To: Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

From: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate, Immigration,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Date: March 2, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB1035, Health Insurance – Qualified Resident State Subsidy Program (Access to Care Act). Access to affordable health care, particularly during the current pandemic, is a right not to be denied because of immigration status. It is an issue that affects all of us.

I encourage you to vote in favor of this bill.

Despite contributing hundreds of millions of dollars to the Maryland economy annually; our undocumented immigrant neighbors, many of whom would otherwise qualify for Medicaid, are currently ineligible due to their immigration status. Many of them have been deemed essential workers during the pandemic, increasing their — and their families' — risk of contracting Covid-19 and other illnesses that could threaten our public safety if left untreated. We can begin to correct this inequity by ensuring that our immigrant neighbors have access to health insurance provided via the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, non-citizens are significantly more likely than citizens to be uninsured. In 2019, among the non-elderly population, 25% of lawfully present immigrants and more than four in ten (46%) undocumented immigrants were uninsured compared to less than one in ten (9%) citizens. Among citizen children, those with at least one non-citizen parent are more likely to be uninsured compared to those with citizen parents (9% vs. 5%)

I share my faith with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists in Maryland who are called to promote and affirm justice, equity and compassion in human relations and as such, I urge you to provide equitable access to health care for all Marylanders, including our immigrant neighbors by voting in favor of HB 1035.

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Thank you.

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Sources:

American Immigration Council,

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-maryland>

Kaiser Family Foundation

<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/health-coverage-and-care-of-undocumented-immigrants/>

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