



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

**Testimony in support, with amendment, of House Bill 588  
Probation Before Judgment – Probation Agreements**

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

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

Date: February 21, 2023

We are writing in **support, with amendment, of House Bill 588, Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act)**, 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.

HB588 will amend the purpose of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Fund so that all Maryland residents, regardless of their immigration status, have access to the coverage and subsidies otherwise available to all other eligible Maryland residents.

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.

The sole amendment we request is to make explicit that the funding for the new Qualified Resident program be equivalent (provide the same level of affordability) to that provided other eligible residents. This could be done, for instance, by adding the following clause to section 31-124(A):

**(5): "That provides State premium assistance and cost-sharing reduction subsidies for Qualified Residents that seek to attain the same level of health plan affordability and limit on out of pocket costs experienced by all other health plan purchasers on the exchange."**

We respectfully urge you to reach a **favorable with amendment** report for HB588. It will provide the benefits of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Fund to all residents of Maryland. It is the right and moral thing to do.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry Kickenson  
Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator  
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