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TESTIMONY ON HB588- FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT
Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program
(Access to Care Act)

TO: Chair Pena-Melnyk and Vice Chair Kelly and members of the Health & Government Operations Committee

FROM: Carol Stern

My name is Carol Stern, and I am testifying in favor of HB588 with amendments, as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.

Jewish tradition teaches that human life has infinite value and that the preservation of life supersedes almost all other considerations. We have seen that health inequities were exacerbated during the pandemic. We must use this teaching in developing health policy for Maryland to make sure that **every resident no matter what their immigration status is has access to the highest attainable standard of healthcare. No one should get sick or die because of their income or immigration status.**

HB588 is not only critical legislation for our undocumented community, but it is also sound policy for the state. According to the 2022 fiscal analysis for the same proposal, HB588 would reduce premiums in the individual market by 2.3% in the first year it is enacted. Furthermore, having access to the individual marketplace and a doctor will decrease the number of emergency room visits that uninsured individuals with illnesses make.

Access to routine yearly checkups will ensure that our undocumented immigrant children, youth, and adults live better, healthier, and more productive lifestyles that ultimately make our communities more vibrant. This common-sense legislation is uncontentious and aligns Maryland with its values of protecting life and treating all people with dignity, respect, and care.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable with amendments report on HB588.