
SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO STUDY PROVIDING CERTAIN HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ALL CHILDREN AND PREGNANT PERSONS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE QUALIFY FOR COVERAGE IF NOT FOR THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS.

1 WHEREAS, it is in the public interest that all pregnant
2 persons and children receive high-quality health care that is
3 accessible, affordable, and equitable; and
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5 WHEREAS, limited access to health care based solely on
6 immigration status results in many immigrants and their families
7 being unable to obtain affordable health care coverage through
8 Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and
9 health insurance exchanges established under part II of the
10 federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA); and
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12 WHEREAS, low-income immigrants without prenatal care are
13 seven times more likely to give birth prematurely and five times
14 more likely to experience neonatal death; and
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16 WHEREAS, the average cost of medical care for health
17 problems resulting from premature birth is \$79,000, compared to
18 \$1,000 for a healthy birth; and
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20 WHEREAS, the cost of hospitalizations during a severely
21 premature newborn's first year of life can exceed \$500,000, and
22 the cost of intensive care can exceed \$1,000,000; and
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24 WHEREAS, lack of prenatal care results in health care costs
25 being passed on to taxpayers; and
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27 WHEREAS, low-income immigrant children without access to
28 health insurance face persistent inequities in the prevention,
29 diagnosis, and treatment of health conditions, including routine
30 health problems and those commonly addressed with necessary
31 specialty care and mental health, substance abuse, and oral
32 health services; and



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WHEREAS, children with special needs, including difficulties with hearing, vision, mobility, self-care, cognitive function, and work limitations, may qualify for Medicaid through various disability-related pathways; and

WHEREAS, a 2021 study published in *Academic Pediatrics* found that for each dollar spent on children through Medicaid, the government saved \$4 on future costs, including hospitalizations and emergency visits, and when the benefits to children themselves are included, each dollar spent on Medicaid coverage generates at least \$12.66; and

WHEREAS, state and federal laws deny access to Medicaid, CHIP, and health insurance exchanges established under part II of PPACA to all Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients; undocumented persons; and applicants without work authorization attached to the applicant's request for registry, order of supervision, cancellation of removal or suspension of deportation, legalization under the Immigration Reform and Control Act, legalization under the Legal Immigration Family Equity Act, and asylum, except asylee children under fourteen years old; and

WHEREAS, the State is home to an estimated 41,246 undocumented persons; and

WHEREAS, the State's undocumented and DACA-eligible residents were born in the Philippines (54.6 percent); Japan (9.3 percent); China (8.8 percent); Korea (6.2 percent); Mexico (4.6 percent); and Europe, Canada, and other countries (16.5 percent) and paid an estimated \$66,000,000 in federal income taxes and nearly \$32,000,000 in state and local taxes in 2018; and

WHEREAS, approximately eleven thousand of the State's undocumented persons are uninsured, and many who are insured receive individual and family health insurance through the Prepaid Health Care Act; and

WHEREAS, twenty-five states provide or will soon provide health care coverage for prenatal care for all persons,



1 regardless of immigration status, and eleven states provide or
2 will soon provide CHIP benefits or coverage similar to Medicaid
3 to all children, regardless of immigration status; now,
4 therefore,
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6 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
7 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023,
8 that the Department of Human Services is requested to study
9 providing Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, or
10 similar health insurance coverage for all children and pregnant
11 persons who would otherwise qualify for coverage under these
12 programs if not for their immigration status; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study is requested to
15 include the health care opportunities, resources, and costs
16 relating to providing the described coverages; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human
19 Services is requested to engage applicable stakeholders in the
20 study, including immigrant health care providers, social service
21 providers, and advocacy groups; and
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23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human
24 Services is requested to submit a report regarding the findings
25 of the study, including any proposed legislation, to the
26 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
27 the Regular Session of 2024; and
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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
30 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Attorney General,
31 Director of Human Services, and President of the Inter-Agency
32 Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services.

