

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1570

My name is Sonia Milbank, and I have worked as a hospital social worker for 13 years. Throughout my career, I have held deep respect for every patient I have served, but I have been profoundly impacted by the undocumented immigrants I have had the privilege of caring for.

Over the years, I have witnessed countless examples of extraordinary strength and resilience:

the mother who gave every dollar she had to ensure her child could cross the border because doing nothing meant certain death—and in doing so, gained ten more years to love him;

the mother who wept when I explained that her child would require 24-hour care following a devastating brain injury, and who then left the only agricultural work she had ever known to provide that care with unwavering devotion;

the fear in a young boy's eyes when I asked his name as his father was admitted to the hospital—afraid that answering might bring immigration authorities to both of them.

Of all these stories, one continues to haunt me. I worked with a young mother who came to this country from a small village in Mexico in search of a better life. When her daughter became critically ill, she worked ten-hour days in the fields, then drove nearly two hours to the hospital to sit at her daughter's bedside, only to return home and begin again the next morning. This routine continued for weeks. Her quiet strength and resilience have stayed with me in ways that are difficult to fully describe.

No parent should ever fear seeking medical care for their child. No child should go without care.

This country was built on the promise of liberty and justice for all—not liberty and justice only for those born on a particular side of an arbitrary border, not only for those who can navigate complex paperwork or read and write fluently, but for all people.

I urge lawmakers to advance Legislation 1570 and protect the fundamental human right to seek medical care—for parents, for children, and for the families who come to our hospitals simply asking for help.