

Insurance and Real Estate Committee

Public Testimony of the CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
Submitted by: Madeline Granato, Policy Manager and Alisha Soto, MSW Intern
February 14, 2019

SB 330: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A HUMAN RIGHT TO EQUAL ENJOYMENT OF THE
HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF HEALTH
HB 6093: AN ACT CONCERNING CONSIDERATION OF IMMIGRATION STATUS BY
HEALTH CARRIERS

The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide nonprofit that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-five years, CWEALF is leading advocate of policy solutions that enhance women's economic security and increase women's access to healthcare. CWEALF is an active member of the Coalition for Choice, a group that promotes policies that improve women's access to reproductive health care and protects a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

CWEALF urges the committee to support Senate Bill 330: *An Act Establishing a Human Right to Equal Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Health*, which will reinstate statutory language stating that health care is a human right.

Access to affordable health care is not only a human right; it is also a critical component to advance the economic security of women in our state. More than 170,000 households in Connecticut are headed by women who need access to comprehensive health care services in order to support their families. Women with access to affordable health care are less likely to forego or delay much needed medical treatment and preventive care, such as pap smears, mammograms, and flu vaccines.

Lack of access to affordable health care disproportionately impacts women of color, who also face a significant gender wage gap and disparities in health outcomes, and access to health care and services. Black women are 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white womenⁱ and also experience a higher rate of maternal mortality, as they are 3 to 4 times more likely to die during childbirth than non-Hispanic white women.ⁱⁱ Latina women also often face health disparities and have the highest incidence rate of cervical cancer in the United States.ⁱⁱⁱ

CWEALF also urges to the Committee to pass House Bill No. 6093: *An Act Concerning Consideration of Immigration Status by Health Carriers* to prohibit certain health carriers from refusing to deliver, issue, renew, amend, or continue certain health insurance policies in Connecticut solely on the basis of immigration status. All Connecticut workers,

regardless of income or immigration status, should have access to comprehensive, affordable health care.

ⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/breastcancer/index.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2018/05/10/450577/health-care-system-racial-disparities-maternal-mortality/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4955974/>