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Legislation Text

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Resolution to ensure Illinois's future by insuring all Illinoisans

WHEREAS, 21.8% of all business owners in Illinois are immigrants generating \$5.4 billion in total net business income each year and that Latinos and Asians in Illinois have annual purchasing power of \$77.5 billion and that undocumented immigrants in Illinois pay state and local taxes and make full contribution to the Social Security Trust Fund.

WHEREAS, Illinois, California, Massachusetts, Washington, New York, and Washington D.C. all provide health insurance to children regardless of immigration status.

WHEREAS, Representative Luis Gutierrez of the 4th Congressional District of Illinois, introduced H.R. 3659, The Exchange Inclusion for a Healthy America Act of 2015, in the 114th Congress, which if enacted would give individuals, regardless of their immigration status, access to the private health insurance marketplaces created under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

WHEREAS, Hillary Clinton, Martin O'Malley, Bernie Sanders - candidates for the office of President of the United States in 2016 have publicly endorsed state and federal policies that provide access to health insurance for immigrants, including undocumented children and their families.

WHEREAS, Illinois welcomes people of all races, ethnicities, religions and nationalities.

WHEREAS, there are more than 1.1 million uninsured Illinois residents, including more than 300,000 immigrants who currently do not have a pathway to affordable health insurance coverage.

WHEREAS, Illinois ensures that low-income children and pregnant women regardless of immigration status have access to quality health insurance through its All Kids and Moms & Babies health insurance programs.

WHEREAS, Illinois ensures that all eligible drivers in Illinois are able to obtain a driver's license regardless of immigration status and the Illinois General Assembly enacted the Illinois DREAM Act, a historic law opening educational opportunities for Illinois children.

WHEREAS, in cities across Illinois, especially in Chicago, immigrant family-owned small businesses contribute to the vitality of their communities, with restaurants, markets, shops, and other goods and services representing diverse nationalities and ethnicities.

WHEREAS, Chicago aspires to be the world's most immigrant-friendly city and the Chicago New Americans Plan aims to "welcome immigrants and maximize the contribution they make" to Chicago.

WHEREAS, an estimated half million undocumented immigrants reside in Illinois, and they are a vital part of the

cultural and economic fabric of our community, participating in our state's workforce and paying more than half a billion dollars in state and local taxes annually.

WHEREAS, undocumented adult residents are currently ineligible for Illinois' Medicaid program, even if living in extreme poverty, and undocumented residents are not allowed to purchase private health insurance - even at fullprice - in the Get Covered Illinois health insurance marketplace.

WHEREAS, uninsured residents who, by age, illness or accident, must resort to emergency care in hospitals or rely on over-burdened federally qualified health care providers and/or charity care as their main sources of health care.

WHEREAS, this lack of access to health insurance often results in forgoing or delaying necessary health care, which in turn, delays detection of disease, worsens chronic conditions, and results in irregular and uncoordinated primary health care and no true medical home.

WHEREAS, Illinois has a moral and economic interest in providing coordinated primary and preventive care early, rather than more expensive and intrusive care when it is too late.

WHEREAS, expanding health insurance coverage to undocumented adult immigrants would contribute to better access to care, increased use of preventive services, better management of chronic illness and, eventually, longer and healthier lives.

WHEREAS, expanding health insurance coverage to undocumented adult immigrants would prevent major financial crisis for individuals and families by reducing consumer bankruptcies due to medical debt.

WHEREAS, more than two out of five of undocumented adults live in families with children, providing access to health coverage for parents provides children with better care from healthier parents and boosts children's financial security.

WHEREAS, expanding health insurance coverage to undocumented adult immigrants would allow the government to recoup a portion of any health insurance investment in the form of higher future tax payments.

WHEREAS, expanding health insurance coverage to undocumented adult immigrants would create a healthier pool of employees, who take fewer sick days and are more productive.

WHEREAS, expanding health insurance coverage to undocumented adult immigrants would reduce the number of uninsured patients seen in hospitals and by other medical providers and therefore reduce uncompensated care costs.

WHEREAS, expanding health insurance coverage to undocumented adult immigrants would reduce the burden on local governments, such as the City of Chicago, that currently pay for a portion of health care for the uninsured.

WHEREAS, expanding health insurance coverage to undocumented adult immigrants would help fill the gap

Illinois hospitals face by reductions in Medicare Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments over the next few years. Federal and state governments spend billions of dollars to offset the cost of uncompensated care in the form of DSH payments.

WHEREAS, the Healthy Illinois Campaign is a growing state-wide campaign representing civic, community, faith, business, education, and health care leaders, institutions, and organizations working to make affordable, comprehensive health insurance accessible to all Illinois residents.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Chicago City Council that we urge the Illinois General Assembly to pass legislation ensuring that every Illinois resident has access to affordable, comprehensive health insurance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Chicago City Council that we urge the Governor to sign such legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Illinois Congressional delegation vote in favor of federal legislation, such as Congressman Gutierrez's, H.R. 3659, The Exchange Inclusion for Healthy America Act of 2015, which would give individuals regardless of their immigration status, access to health insurance market places created under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.