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Testimony of

**Orlando Rodriguez**

**Connecticut Education Association**

Before the

**Human Services Committee**

March 19, 2019

**Re:**

[SB 1053 AN ACT EXPANDING MEDICAID AND HUSKY B COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN](#)

**CEA supports SB 1053**

Good morning Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Logan, Representative Case, and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Orlando Rodriguez. I serve as the Research and Policy Development Specialist for the Connecticut Education Association, which is the largest teachers union in Connecticut, representing thousands of active and retired teachers across the state who inform our legislative priorities.

CEA wholeheartedly supports SB 1053. Federal law requires that all children receive a free public education regardless of their immigration status, and CEA supports this. The reality is that some of the children in Connecticut's classrooms are from families who are in the U.S. without documentation, which is not the fault of the child. These students get sick just like any child and may be ill for long periods because they do not have access to healthcare, which may also contribute to their having a higher rate of absenteeism. Moreover, just like many other students, undocumented children may come to school sick because their parents are hourly workers who earn income only when they work and cannot afford to stay home with a sick child.

The legislature must pass this bill because it addresses a public health concern for all students and staff in our schools. Furthermore, it may help lower the rate of absenteeism in our urban districts.

We thank you for all the time you spend on this committee and for your interest in improving the health of all children in Connecticut.