

**TESTIMONY OF SAL LUCIANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
COUNCIL 4 AFSCME  
RE: S.B. No. 462 (LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE)  
MARCH 9, 2006**

Good afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Committee.

My name is Sal Luciano, and I am the Executive Director of Council 4, a union representing 35,000 employees in Connecticut.

I am here today to express our union's support for SB 462, An Act Concerning a Fair Share Health Care Surcharge.

Many years ago, Walter Cronkite said that the American health care system is neither healthy, nor caring, nor a system. In the last five years the amount of employees covered by Medical insurance has continually dropped.

I daresay, in this room, the number with medical coverage is 100%, but in the real world every fourth one of us would have no insurance. That is a disgrace.

Not insuring employees is bad public policy. Be clear, we already have a strange and wasteful universal health care system in this state.

It's called the public hospital emergency room. It is the most expensive form of medical delivery as it is crisis dependent.

What does pre-natal care cost compared to keeping a 1 and ½ lb. premature baby alive? What does an insulin shot cost compared to the cost of treating a person in a diabetic coma? What do antibiotics cost to treat an infection compared to amputating a gangrenous limb?

I support fair share because it is moral and good public policy. The largest and wealthiest corporation in the world should not siphon taxpayer dollars to subsidize their employees but that is precisely what is happening. Last year we found more than 2,600 Wal-Mart employees on the state Medicaid roles.

Last year, a man who earned \$53.8 million, spoke against this very bill. Last year it was called pay or play. This man heads UTC, and I remember thinking at the time, why is he doing this? This law would not even apply to his employees.

But today, as the Teamsters strike because of his proposal to double the cost of their Health Care premiums, it's obvious why he spoke for CBIA. They ultimately want to the ability to reduce or drop medical coverage for their workers.

I do not begrudge the man his \$53.8 million dollar annual salary. I suppose he works hard for it. I do not begrudge the seven tax cuts Bush gave him and people like him because, maybe it's difficult for him to survive on \$53.8 million dollars a year. But... he is hardly the person who can empathize with working people who are one illness away, one sick spouse away or one sick child away, from living on the street.

Last year, the house listened to that \$53.8 million dollar man and not to the tens of thousands of anxious Connecticut employees who either do not have health care, or employees who do have health care but see it priced out of reach every year.

I am not anti-business. I think Connecticut would be more business friendly if the state took the visionary step of providing health care to every Connecticut resident. But you are not ready, as a body, to take that bold step.

I beg you, in the meantime, take a baby step and have the courage to tell the richest corporation in the world that they can pay their own employee's health care.

Thank you very much.