

SEIU Local 2001/760



Retirees

Council 400

since 1962

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My name is Hollis Block and I am writing in support of Proposed House Bill 6693: **AN ACT CONCERNING CREATION OF A STATE HEALTH CARE PLAN.** I am here representing the over 12,000 state of Connecticut retirees of CSEA SEIU Local 2001 Council 400.

Retirees in CSEA/SEIU Local 2001's Council 400 are committed to a "single payer" plan to provide coverage that is truly universal; otherwise, Connecticut's taxpayers will continue to bear the health costs of the uninsured and underinsured.

A single payer plan would save doctors' and patients' time, protect taxpayer resources, preserve consumer choice, and save lives of uninsured children and adults across the state. Small businesses and municipalities could form an insurance pool, so that health care would not be costly. If everyone shares the risk, rates would come down. No one would be uninsured due to a prior illness.

When devising a state health care plan I would address the issue of the various forms that medical providers must fill out for each insurance company. I suggest uniformity in what needs to be filled out. According to a statement by ex-Comptroller, Bill Curry, on a radio interview, about \$.33 of each health care dollar is spent on filling out and filing paperwork. He quoted \$.16 for Canada...more than twice the United States!

About \$235 billion nationally is spent on prescriptions each year. Those medications you get from the drugstore are supplied by pharmacy benefit managers, who are the middlemen between drug companies and employers that offer drug subsidies to their workers. The four largest prescription benefit managers are Caremark Rx, Medco Health Solutions, Wellpoint and Express Scripts. The bigger a benefits manager is, the more clout they have when negotiating prices with drug makers, which in turn could lead to lower drug prices for consumers.

The state of Connecticut, with an enlarged consumer group, would also have greater negotiating power. I sit on the Health Care Cost Containment Committee for the state of Connecticut employees and retirees. We have been shown evidence from the state contractor, Milliman, Inc. (80 Lambertson Road, Windsor, CT 06095) just how much that clout is.

Our Council 400 members are supporting legislative solutions to create a single payer plan that would be portable, affordable, accessible and sustainable for our economy. We believe the well-being of all residents will be improved by access to quality health care. Any plan developed must also uphold the collective bargaining agreements in place and those agreements already in place in the private sector.

Our members made history in the 1980s when we successfully advocated for retiree health care coverage for State public service workers. Nearly 20 years later, we are again standing together as agents of change, to force the universal health care tide to rise. We believe that is the only way to lift all boats in our society.

Universal Health Care is our opportunity to reform our state's broken system because controlling costs, improving accountability, and preserving benefits while insuring everyone strengthens our own health care security.

I thank you for your time and consideration and urge passage of this bill that will begin the road to Health Care Coverage for all of Connecticut.