

Testimony by Dan Durso for Bill No. SB-1 2007

Good Morning Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and members of the committee. My name is Dan Durso, and I'm a Trustee and Political Coordinator with Teamsters Local 559. Teamsters Local 559 is located in South Windsor and represents approximately 1200 members in trades such as construction, food warehousing, and energy.

I'm here to speak on Senate Bill #1. First I'd like to thank Senator Williams for submitting such a bill, a bill that goes farther than most, but not quite far enough to fix an ailing health care system.

Recently I read some remarks from legislators regarding SB1. One remark that stood out to me was the one that said when it comes to fixing Connecticut's health care crisis; we don't need to reinvent the wheel. I agree with that, we don't need to reinvent the wheel but we do need to replace it. The wheel is broken and we need a new one. We need a new wheel (hopefully made by UAW) and its name is Single-payer.

We at Teamsters believe single payer makes the most sense, and dollars. According to studies recently done by the Universal Health Care Foundation, due to the overall reduction in employers labor costs, as many as 6000 to 11,000 new jobs could be created. We always hear in these rooms that any types of bills that improve workers lives are always labeled job killers. Well here's a chance to pass meaningful ground breaking legislation and create thousands of jobs. A chance to show the ones who constantly bad mouth single payer plans that we could do it right. We could do it better then some of those European countries that are always mentioned when discussing what's wrong with single payer. We have a chance to lead the country into a new day for all working people.

So how does this affect Teamsters, who normally have good insurance plans? For one it would remove the most contentious item from negotiations, allowing companies and workers alike to concentrate on things like wages, pensions, and benefits. Last year Teamsters Local 1150 at UTC Sikorsky in Stratford had a prolonged strike over this issue, and ended up paying even more for health care. Other bargaining units of UTC are facing the same thing such as the IAM Machinists recently at Power Cells in South Windsor. Another thing it would do for Teamsters is that it would help level the playing field for our employers, who compete with companies that refuse to offer their employees affordable health care.

In closing let me leave you with this quote from Martin Luther King "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is most shocking and inhumane". The time is now for Connecticut to lead the way for America to join the rest of the industrialized world and provide universal health care to all its residents. Thanks you all for your time.

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