



Connecticut Business & Industry Association

TESTIMONY OF
BONNIE D. STEWART
BEFORE THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
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My name is Bonnie Stewart. I am Vice President of Government Affairs for the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents approximately 10,000 businesses throughout Connecticut, the vast majority are small companies employing less than 50 people.

CBIA supports the intent of **SB 1127, An Act Concerning the Charter Oak Health Plan and Health Care Access**. This measure attempts to address the issue of comprehensive health care reform in Connecticut by focusing on market-based approaches.

CBIA believes lawmakers should respond to the state's challenges by making economic growth and job creation their top priority. Our priorities remain the same, reflecting the concerns of employers large and small throughout Connecticut:

- Make business costs more competitive
- Enhance the skills of our workforce
- Improve our energy and transportation infrastructures

We believe lawmakers should expand on last session's pro-growth agenda by taking a more strategic approach to economic development that will lead to sustainable growth. Taking steps to begin addressing the quality and cost of health care is an extremely important part of making Connecticut's business costs more competitive. This is demonstrated in the results of our latest membership survey which showed that more than three-quarters of our members said rising health benefit costs are negatively affecting their ability to hire additional workers.

CBIA would like to work with the legislature and the administration to develop a comprehensive plan to control health care costs and expand access to quality, employer-sponsored health insurance.

To achieve this goal, we believe steps should be taken to:

- Increase consumer access to provider quality and cost data so they are able to make more informed health care decisions
- Promote greater efficiencies in the health care system and improve quality by creating the framework for a system of interoperable and secure electronic medical records
- Promote healthier lifestyles and improve the overall health of Connecticut residents by encouraging employee wellness and disease-prevention programs
- Give consumers the ability to better manage and reduce their health care costs by allowing more flexible plan designs.
- Stop the current cost shifting from the public sector to the private sector by increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals and other providers
- Enact a moratorium on new health benefit mandates.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on **SB 1127**. We look forward to working with you as you consider this issue further.