AFSCME

Connecticut Council of Police Unions

AFSCME Council 15 / AFL-CIO

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March 2, 2009

Testimony in support of:
***Raised Bill No. 6582 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP* (LCO No. 4045)**

Members of the:
Public Health Committee
Human Services Committee
Insurance and Real Estate Committee

Workers and their families are waging an increasingly difficult struggle to secure or to keep good health care coverage. Almost every worker must battle and sacrifice merely to sustain health care benefits. More than 46 million people in the U. S. are currently without health insurance, more than 75 million went without coverage for some length of time within the last two years, and millions more have inadequate coverage or are at risk of losing coverage. Minorities, immigrants and women are denied health care at disproportionate rates, while the elderly and many others must choose between necessities and life sustaining drugs and care. Unorganized workers have either no or inadequate coverage. The Institute of Medicine has found that each year more than 18,000 in the U. S. die because they had no health insurance.

The United States health system continues to treat health care as a commodity distributed according to the ability to pay, rather than as a social service to be distributed according to human need. While we spend approximately twice as much of our gross domestic product as other developed nations on health care, we remain the only industrialized country without a plan that covers all in need. Insurance companies and HMOs compete not by increasing quality or lowering costs, but by avoiding covering to those whose needs are greatest. The problem deteriorates as insurance costs rise and patchwork solutions fail to adequately address the issue.

Council 15, representing sworn police officers in sixty two municipalities in Connecticut, supports health care reform and *Raised Bill No. 6582*. Health care reform would apply savings from administration and profits to expanded and improved coverage for all. Economic necessity and moral conscience compel us to seek a better way.