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**TESTIMONY RE: RAISED BILL 6582 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE
CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP**

Public Health Committee
March 2, 2009

TO: Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee.
FROM: Connecticut Nurses' Association

Connecticut Nurses' Association supports this bill conceptually, which would reduce the costs to municipalities and small businesses and increase benefits for these employees by opening the state employee insurance pool and allowing these employees to join.

Our Association has seen the cost of offering health insurance – especially plans that are comprehensive – for our employees rise significantly over the last years and become a big part of our budget. Many smaller businesses cannot make the same commitment that we do, which is to offer the best, almost regardless of cost. As we testify on behalf of those who have no health insurance or who are under-insured, we'd be hypocritical to do less than this.

There are a number of committees and recommendations that are in the mix of bills this year that are related to insuring more of Connecticut's citizens. The Connecticut Nurses Association supports conceptually health care for all citizens of Connecticut. This is one of the many bills that begin to address the increasing crisis of the increasing number of uninsured.

Nurses represent the largest group of health care providers. They practice in all health care settings, as consultants to business and industry, as primary providers of health care services, as educators and researchers, as legislators and regulators, and as the constant in disease care and prevention. Therefore as nurses we want to make sure the following questions are addressed in all proposed plans. Questions we as nurses and you should ask about any “Health Reform Proposal”

- Is it a truly inclusive system where no one is left out?
- Does it improve people’s access to health care?
- Does it reallocate resources and infrastructure to support primary care and prevention?
- Does it rely on evidence-based care and reward quality?
- Does it tackle disparities in health care quality and outcomes, especially among vulnerable populations?
- Is it affordable for working families? Does it protect families from financial ruin in cases where health care expenses are disproportionately large?
- Does it offer affordable and predictable costs to businesses and employers?
- Does it demand accountability, transparency and equity from the private health care marketplace? Does it invest in nursing?
- Does it open the door for RNs to optimize their skills, knowledge and abilities in all roles and settings to help patients?
- Does it provide a coherent national health care vision and strategy?

AND perhaps the most important for registered nurses—how will this affect my patients? (The American Nurse, September/October 2008)

We thank you for this opportunity to present testimony and we urge you to adopt the best plan for the citizens of Connecticut.