

Honorable Senators and Representatives

My name is Eva Csejtey, an Intern at the American Friends Service Committee – Connecticut.

I am here today to testify on Bill # 6600, "An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Sustinet Plan".

You have heard today on the importance of passing Bill 6600 which provides healthcare for every one who chooses Sustinet. You have been informed on the rising ten percent yearly health care costs that consume over one third of the state budget. You are aware each day more Connecticut residents are losing their employment which affects health care benefits. You have heard testimonies of the decline of quality health care while costs have increased. You are knowledgeable of insurance exclusions that refuse medical treatment for predetermined diseases such as diabetes, a growing and treatable disease. And your sensitivity to Connecticut residents who are dying because of the lack of quality health care is appreciated.

However, you may not have heard from testimonies that the lack of affordable health care does influence major life decisions. Twenty-seven years ago, my decision to marry was connected to my need for health care. I was identified by insurance companies as a medical risk because of my age and was unable to afford an individual plan. Not much has changed since the 1980's except for escalating health care expenses and the decline of real spendable earnings. With the Sustinet Plan, Connecticut residents would be guaranteed quality health care and make life decisions based on their desires and not their health care needs.

Let me provide an example of current public plans and their inadequacies which have been addressed by Sustinet. A colleague of mine explained his frustration due to the lack of immediate coverage, back log of appointments, minimal physician availability, required travel distance, and lack of concern for patient circumstances. I have an example using fictitious names: Jill's 2 year old son, Jesus has seizures and is referred to a specialist by his pediatrician. Jill leaves early to the appointment an hour away. On the way, Jesus vomits in the car and Jill stops to buy items to clean up the mess and clean clothes for Jesus. Jill arrives fifteen minutes late and is told rudely she would have to reschedule the appointment two weeks away despite her circumstances. This story is only one of many. Sustinet would eliminate these problems with better reimbursement rates, local physicians, improved communication and reimbursement for case management.

On behalf of the American Friends Service Committee, I implore you to address the health needs of Connecticut residents to live a healthy lifestyle and promote economic justice. Connecticut residents are counting on you to provide healthcare4every1 and start saving lives today. And I challenge the Honorable Senators and Representatives of Connecticut to *lead* the nation on health care reform.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak and would be happy to answer any questions.