



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Lori Pelletier, Secretary-Treasurer Connecticut AFL-CIO

Before the Joint Public Hearing

March 2, 2009

Good morning distinguished co-chairs and members of the Public Health, Insurance & Real Estate and Human Services Committees my name is Lori Pelletier and I serve as Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, which represents 220,000 workers from each and every city and town in our State.

I am here to testify in support of the following bills before you today because each of them plays an integral part in fixing our health care system

H.B. No. 6582 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP. (INS)

This bill would provide necessary relief to our municipalities by providing them with an opportunity to save money without jeopardizing quality. Until we can fix the current way health care is delivered pooling is the best option. Municipal workers are being used as scapegoats by groups looking to balance municipal budgets on the backs of municipal workers, and that the idea of municipal pooling is a solution that's long overdue.

In the last six years, the cost of health insurance has gone up almost 90%, and this is not sustainable for workers and it's not sustainable for employers by putting municipal employees in the state employee insurance pool potentially we could save taxpayers "hundreds of millions of dollars".

S.B. No. 1049 (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING CERTAIN GIFTS FROM PHARMACEUTICAL AND MEDICAL DEVICE COMPANIES TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

We couldn't agree more with the Attorney General Blumenthal and others who have said that "Simply put, the practice of allowing pharmaceutical and device manufacturers (or anyone with a vested interest in the decisions of prescriber's) to make gifts or payments of cash or goods creates an unacceptable conflict of interest that drives up costs and threatens the integrity of our

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health care system. Drug companies spend over \$6 billion annually on marketing, and according to the New England Journal of Medicine, 94% of physicians receive some kind of payment or in-kind gratuity from drug manufacturers.”

H.B. No. 6600 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUSTINET PLAN.

Many people have been talking about universal healthcare for a long time. This bill gives us all a blueprint on how it CAN be accomplished. Our members deal with the issue of healthcare at every bargaining table. Cost vs. quality and quality vs. delivery and delivery vs. cost is what it boils down to. HB 6600 stops that cycle. By implementing HB 6600 all of us can finally have control over our health.

From consolidating all public dollars spent on healthcare into one pool, to streamlining of medical data, to everyone having a medical home HB 6600 is the answer. There is plenty of data, study groups, and evidence to support this bill; we hope that the General Assembly and the Governor will too. HB 6600 is a good bill and will be great policy for Connecticut.

I want to applaud the leadership and members of these committees for holding this public hearing today and if there are any questions I would be happy to address them.

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