



The Voice of Small Business®

CONNECTICUT

**TESTIMONY OF
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS
BY
ANDY MARKOWSKI, CONNECTICUT STATE DIRECTOR
OPPOSING
HB-6600, AAC THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUSTINET PLAN
BEFORE THE
INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE; PUBLIC HEALTH; AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEES
MARCH 2, 2009**

The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), Connecticut's and the nation's leading small-business advocacy association, respectfully submits the following comments opposing HB-6600, An Act Concerning The Establishment Of The Sustinet Plan:

NFIB has long supported bringing health insurance costs down for job-providers; however, small business strongly objects to the types of mandates, punitive measures and "pay-or-play" components contained in HB-6600.

While many of the components contained in the Sustinet proposal are laudable and supported by small business (particularly those aimed at reducing health care costs and improving quality such as increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates, improving technology and increasing access to health care data), overall, small business objects to the type of sweeping state-level comprehensive reforms contained in this proposal. Major health insurance reforms need to be led first and foremost by federal level initiatives; the sanctity of Connecticut residents' and business' money and health is far too valuable for the state to serve as an experimental proving ground for proposals of this nature.

Lawmakers should keep in mind the following points when considering health care reform proposals:

- Business owners are best equipped to make the decision about when, what type, and how much health insurance they can afford to provide.
- In today's competitive employment market, voluntarily providing robust benefits is a key way small businesses attract and keep good employees.
- Lawmakers should focus on providing incentives to business owners to provide health insurance rather than implementing a punitive mandated system.

Although NFIB is supportive of common-sense initiatives to bend the curve on health-care costs, small business will continue to oppose government-run health care, a system that imposes a new mandate or results in a payroll tax penalty, or uses a convoluted new system of "employer vouchers".

Finally, it is worth addressing questions which may periodically arise about the representativeness of NFIB policy positions. Do NFIB positions really represent the small business population as a whole or just NFIB members? A research study conducted in January 2009 concluded that NFIB policy positions do indeed represent those of the general small business population as a whole, not just NFIB members, thus truly making NFIB the "Voice of Small Business"® throughout Connecticut on health care reform and other important issues as well.