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**Testimony Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
State Comptroller Nancy Wyman
February 18, 2010**

Good afternoon Chairman Crisco, Chairman Fontana, Senator Caligiuri, Representative D'Amelio and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. I am State Comptroller Nancy Wyman and I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of **House Bill 5004, "An Act Concerning Transparency in Health Insurance Claims Data."**

If enacted, this legislation would allow municipalities in the state the opportunity to request claims data from the entity that is offering them their group health insurance policy.

Specifically, insurers would be required, over the most recent 36 month period, to provide claims experience, monthly premiums and the number of those insured by coverage tier to the government body or employer to which they are issuing coverage. The insurer would not be obligated to make available the information more than once a year and would present the data in a written report, electronic file or through a secure website. In order to protect sensitive data, information that is required by law to be confidential would be exempt from requests by the insured entity.

In the previous legislative session, opposition to this proposal was raised regarding privacy concerns. I am acutely sensitive to the need to make sure individuals retain the confidentiality that HIPAA and other statutes require. This year's legislation stipulates that an employer is restricted from using information obtained through this proposed bill for cost control and the promotion of wellness initiatives only.

As you are acutely aware, the rising cost of health care is threatening to have serious long term negative impacts on our national, state and local economies. Businesses are also struggling to keep up and their employees are feeling the financial pain of skyrocketing co-payments and deductibles. By 2016, employer sponsored health care plans in Connecticut could rise 75%, with the median household spending 34% of its income on health care needs.

As the economic driver of our state, small businesses make up a significant number of Connecticut's employers. The enormous contribution they offer our economy cannot be underestimated and I encourage the Committee to expand the scope of this legislation to include these vital employers.

Creating greater transparency in our health care system gives employers the ability to make informed, financially sound decisions when determining who to choose as an insurance provider. Employers that have access to claims experience can seek out competitive rates, shop for superior health care benefits and ultimately lower the costs for their employees.

It is my hope that the Committee will take favorable action on this important initiative. Thank you.