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Chairman Fontana
Chairman Crisco
The Joint Committee on Insurance and Real Estate
Room 2800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairman Crisco and Chairman Fontana:

I am writing to express my support for Raised House Bill 5009, *An Act Concerning Wellness Programs and Expansion of Health Insurance Coverage*. My sister was fortunate to recently receive a life-saving bone marrow transplant. I encourage you to help save the lives of other cancer patients by voting in favor of the proposed legislation.

My sister was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). My family and I learned that, in order to survive, she would have to receive a bone marrow transplant. As her only sibling, I had hoped to be her "match." Donors must meet specific chromosomal requirements and, therefore, are often siblings of the patient. After taking a blood test, I discovered that I was not a bone marrow donor candidate for my sister. Doctors informed our family that my sister would be placed on a worldwide bone marrow donor registry in hopes of finding an exact match for transplant.

In order to increase my sister's chances of survival, many family members, coworkers and friends joined efforts to organize bone marrow drives in the local area. In the process, we learned that **in Connecticut donors are charged a substantial fee for bone marrow typing and testing, as compared to neighboring states, such as Rhode Island and Massachusetts, where testing is covered by insurance.** Due to fundraising and the support of our community, we were able to deter the cost of testing for many people. However, other families are not as fortunate. By mandating that insurance companies cover the cost of bone marrow testing, Connecticut residents will be encouraged to help those in need. **Without the worry of cost and coverage, more people will volunteer for and register as a life-saving bone marrow donor.**

If passed, I believe that this bill will increase the amount of bone marrow donors and matches in the worldwide registry, thus increasing the amount of lives saved. Without coverage, donors cannot be assured; without donors, lives cannot be saved. **I urge you to support Bill 5009.**

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Laura DeMonte