TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 6308
AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP
JOHN MURPHY – CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Ritter, Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Public Health, Insurance and Real Estate and Human Services Committees.

My name is John Murphy, and I am here today to express the Connecticut Citizen Action Group's strong support for House Bill 6308, *An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership.*

This bill opens the state employee health plan to non-profits, small businesses with less than 50 employees, and municipalities on a voluntary basis. It gives access to the high quality affordable benefits that you, as legislators and even the Governor, currently enjoy.

It allows employers to take advantage of the increased bargaining power of the State plan's 200,000 members.

It reduces administrative costs due to the efforts of the State's Health Care Cost Containment Committee. The Health Care Cost Containment Committee has been successful for several decades in keeping health care costs down through innovation and economies of scale.

It allows the state to better deal with healthcare costs of non-profits with state contracts directly, without expecting them to absorb increases in healthcare without increases in their payment rates.

It provides badly needed relief to municipalities, who struggle with higher healthcare costs every year, and helps offset local property taxes.

It provides financial relief to small business enterprises our State and our economy rely on — allowing them to provide their employees and their families with good healthcare at fair prices. It enables health care savings to be allocated to growing their businesses and to attract and retain talented people. You know, fuel the engine of our economy.

This bill is a plus for municipalities, small businesses and non-profits who can no longer withstand annual double digit premium increases, sometimes 20 per cent or more.

It is a plus for the State, taxpayers, employers and health care consumers – a plus all around.

In 2009, the General Assembly passed Public Act 09-147, which was the framework for this year's House Bill 6308. I should be testifying today about expanding the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership to include small businesses. We should have already been helping municipalities and non-profits, but we're not.

The former Governor vetoed this forward thinking legislation on behalf of health insurance corporations, the same health insurers believe they're entitled to ask for 38 per cent increases and whine about settling for 20 per cent. They act like the schoolyard bullies who steal our lunch money every day and think they're entitled to it. They're not.

You understand the needs of our cities and towns, small businesses and non-profits. You did the right thing in 2009 by providing us with a choice that would have helped us save real dollars.

In 2011, the needs are greater than ever. As you struggle with a budget deficit, so are all of us. You can use the State's buying power to help us all. Please pass House Bill 6308. Thank you.