

I am a self-employed resident of Connecticut with a successful business writing in the field of education. Three years ago I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma, and two years ago I was successfully treated and am currently in remission. Last year my husband was laid off from his architecture job after 26 years at the same firm. We are currently covered by COBRA, but when that runs out, unless my husband has found a new job with benefits (very difficult for a senior architect right now), we are facing a potentially difficult situation.

I have worked and paid taxes in Connecticut since 1984. I make far more as a freelancer than I could at most of the full-time jobs I would be eligible for if I had to apply for one just to get benefits. (Last year, I grossed over \$100,000.) I worked steadily and profitably throughout chemotherapy and the recent recession. I do volunteer work, donate to charity, and contribute to my community in many ways. The only thing I worry about is having access to affordable healthcare.

With the current opposition to the federal healthcare reform act, it means a great deal to me that Connecticut pass SustiNet. I think to do so is not only humane, it is sensible. I am a perfect example of someone who, with ongoing access to healthcare for a chronic condition and access to affordable healthcare as the owner of a sole proprietorship, can continue for many years to be an economically productive citizen of the state -- paying my taxes, keeping up my home and property, supporting local businesses, and helping others. I think states that forgo comprehensive, intelligent initiatives such as SustiNet in favor of the immediate bottom line are being short-sighted and will lose out in the long run.

Respectfully,
Stacey Sparks

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