

Good Morning Senator Stillman and Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health committee. My name is Matthew Dolan, I live in West Hartford, and I am 28 years old. My wife Vanessa and I were married about 3 years ago, and about 2.5 years ago Vanessa was diagnosed with lupus. Before that Vanessa saw many doctors for many different symptoms, all of which were quite different and seemingly unrelated, but all were related to lupus. Before we understood that lupus was causing symptoms, the treatment process involved visits to different doctors with different specialties without the benefit of cooperation. All doctors treated the symptoms within their expertise, but no doctor actually addressed the disease. This cycle of treating symptoms but not their cause continued until a family friend suggested that lupus may be the cause. Since that time treatment has been focused on the cause of the problem, lupus, and the results have been significantly better. Vanessa started meaningful treatment, in part, because of a good friend with a keen eye.

This bill would be the first step toward building an awareness that would help others shortcut the frustrating cycle of treating various symptoms but not the cause. Learning to see lupus as a forest and not simply a collection of trees would help people see the right doctors, get meaningful treatment, and improve their quality of life sooner rather than later. Awareness of what lupus is and how to best address it on a systematic level is important for those with lupus, their families, and, ultimately, our communities. This bill will advance that goal. Please vote to pass this bill and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much.