



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF  
**REALTORS<sup>®</sup>** INC.

**Statement on**

**H.B. 5487 An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Small Business  
Healthcare Working Group And Claims Information Required To Be Provided By  
Insurers**

**SUPPORT**

Submitted to the Committee on Insurance and Real Estate  
March 13, 2012  
By Robert Kimball, President  
Connecticut Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup>, Inc.

Good afternoon, Chairman Crisco, Chairman Megna, and members of the committee. My name is Robert Kimball and I am the President of the Connecticut Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup>. On behalf of the 15,000 members in Connecticut, I appear today to express the Association's strong support to H.B. 5487 (Raised): An Act Concerning the Recommendation of the Small Business Healthcare Working Group and Claims Information Required to be Provided by Insurers.

As the title indicates the legislation is based on the recommendations of the small business working group. We support the following recommendations which are incorporated in the bill:

1. Allowing small employers with less than 50 employees including self-employed or independent contractors to purchase health insurance through the state employee plan.
2. Eliminates insurer's ability to adjust small group premiums based on age, gender, occupation or group size.
3. Insurers would be required to rate and offer health coverage to associations under current provisions of the law.
4. Requires insurers to report on whether employers' current insurance plans adhere to minimum standards that will be in place in 2014.

(over)

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The Association membership consists primarily of independent contractors and small firms. This sector of the business community has been long at a disadvantage in attaining comprehensive affordable health insurance. For those independent contractors or self-employed coverage is only available on an individual basis being individually rated and underwritten. Price stability in this market is non-existent. The self-employed and the small business community lack the leverage or purchasing power to attain comprehensive health coverage at affordable price levels. The ever increasing cost has a negative impact on small business's ability to attract and retain employees. The self-employed are at a more severe disadvantage being restricted to the individual insurance market with no ability to take advantage of group health coverage.

The limited availability of affordable health insurance has a negative impact on small business which is most important to the economic growth of Connecticut. Innovation is stifled when entrepreneurs are captive to employment that does not fulfill their potential due to the need to remain at their current job for health insurance coverage. Small businesses are reluctant to expand due to the cost of health insurance which is needed to attract employees.

The bill before you will permit small businesses and the self-employed to take advantage of pooling or banding together to attain comprehensive affordable coverage. The proposed legislation requires insurance carriers to rate and offer policies to associations. The intent is to enable associations to leverage their membership in order to attain comprehensive health coverage at stable reasonable costs. It is in no way our intent to become neither an insurance company nor an insurance brokerage. Nor are we seeking any subsidy but only wish to pay the fair share for health coverage. Such pooling or banding together has been available to large employers for years. Now is the time to provide the same opportunity to this important economic sector.

Thank you for your time in considering these comments on a matter of extreme importance to the Association's 15,000 members.

