

H.B. 5485: An Act Concerning the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange
Sharon D. Langer
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
March 15, 2012

Dear Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and Members of the Committee:

I am a Senior Policy Fellow with Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families. The primary focus of my work at Connecticut Voices is on health coverage and access to care for low-income children, parents and pregnant women.

On behalf of Connecticut Voices, I am submitting this testimony in **opposition** to House Bill 5485 which makes changes to the duties of the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange, and would give authority to this Committee to select the benchmark plan sold inside and outside the Exchange. The authority for these decisions must rest with the Health Insurance Exchange.

We oppose, in particular, the elimination of paragraph 17 of Section 1(c) which requires the Exchange to "evaluate jointly with the Sustinet Health Care Cabinet the feasibility of implementing a basic health program option as set forth in Section 1331 of the Affordable Care Act. . ."

Connecticut Voices strongly favors the establishment of a basic health program in order to provide affordable and comprehensive coverage to low-income adults with income between 133% and 200% of the federal poverty level. In 2014, federal law will permit Connecticut to eliminate Medicaid coverage for parents currently on HUSKY A with family income between 133% and 185% FPL and pregnant women with income between 133% and 250% FPL. As a result the establishment of a basic health program is necessary to ensure that these low-income adults – overwhelming mothers of HUSKY children - do not lose access to critical health care for medical, behavioral health and dental services now provided to them. ¹

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 5485. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

¹ See Testimony of CT Voices for Children regarding HB 5450, An Act Establishing a Basic Health Program before the Human Services Committee, available at http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/CommDocTmy.asp?comm_code=HS&date=03/13/2012