

Testimony in Support of SB 425
"AN ACT CONCERNING A BASIC HEALTH PROGRAM
The Rev. Joshua Mason Pawelek

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Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Josh Pawelek. I am the President of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice, a co-chair of the Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care, and the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society: East in Manchester. All three of these organizations have been active in efforts to improve the quality, affordability, and accessibility of health care in Connecticut for many years. As a leader in these organizations, and as one who has lived 4/5 of this life in Connecticut, it is an honor to submit testimony to you in support of SB 425, "An Act Concerning a Basic Health Program."

As you know, states that establish the infrastructure for a Basic Health Program will create a pathway for federal subsidies to meet the health care needs of people and families who fall between 133% and 200% of the federal poverty line. This is precisely the cohort of people who currently face the greatest challenges in obtaining quality, affordable health care and who are likely to be uninsured or vastly under-insured. This is precisely the cohort of people who currently use emergency rooms for basic health care, and whose care is paid for through regular increases in health care premiums for those with insurance. This is also precisely the cohort of people most likely to face continued economic hardship as a result of having to purchase health insurance through the health care exchanges established under the federal "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act."

Passage of SB 425 will position Connecticut to receive federal funds to cover this at-risk cohort, which is likely between 75,000 and 100,000 CT residents. Passage of SB 425 will position Connecticut to take the fullest advantage possible of federal health care innovations.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Joshua Mason Pawelek