

Testimony of Tom Swan, Executive Director, CT Citizen Action Group (CAG)

March 11, 2014

Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee

In Support of 249, 5451 and opposed to 5345

Good Afternoon, Representative Tercyak, Senator Holder-Winfield and other members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee; my name is Tom Swan and I am testifying on behalf of over 20,000 member families of CCAG: CT Citizen Action Group. I want to thank you for having the hearing today and for continuing to propose common sense policy solutions for building a stronger middle class and fighting poverty.

SB 249

CCAG strongly supports SB 249 AAC Retirement Security. The recent downturn in the economy and the collapse of the stock market due to the housing bubble shows the inadequacy of relying on defined contribution retirement plans. The attack on defined benefit plans has been driven by the finance community responsible for the downturn. Since private employers are stepping back from their longstanding compact with their workers and their retirement security it is appropriate for the state to provide a stable mechanism to help people plan for their long term financial security. This is a great step in that direction.

HB 5451

CCAG also strongly supports HB 5451 AAC Health Care Pooling legislation. The changes in the state employee health care plan that was negotiated with the state employee unions has not only saved the state money, but has helped to drive changes in the health care system that emphasizes wellness over treatment. It is a great start in delivery system reform. This bill only requires towns to provide data to the comptroller so they can be more informed shoppers when buying their employees' health insurance. This is necessary to a great deal of misinformation on the state plan that towns have been provided and giving local towns something to compare their costs with will only help towns save money whether they join the state plan or not.

HB 5345

CCAG opposes HB 5345 AAC Cooperative Health Care Arrangements. We have a variety of concerns with the exemptions to existing laws in the bill and the regulatory role for the Health Care Advocate to name a couple. If Doctors want to band together to bargain more effectively we would support that and encourage them to take advantage of their existing rights under labor law by forming a union instead of asking for such special treatment.

Thank you for your consideration.