

February, 26, 2015

Testimony of Chad Lockhart, President of AFSCME Local 2267

HB 6785: AN ACT CONCERNING COOPERATIVE HEALTH CARE ARRANGEMENTS

My name is Chad Lockhart. I am the President of AFSCME Local 2267, representing close to 300 public employees of the Bristol Board of Education. I want to thank this committee for raising House Bill 6785: An Act Concerning Cooperative Health Care Arrangements.

It is our understanding that the intent of the bill is to drive down health insurance costs. As a representative of municipal employees, I can tell you that more needs to be done to invest in quality health care and reduce costs. One way to do this would be to allow municipalities and Boards of Education to buy into the state employee health insurance plan at the same rate charged to state employees.

Right now, members of my local pay close to \$28,000 for a family health care plan. State employees pay about \$20,000. The reason is not because we have rich benefits, it's because we are a smaller pool of plan participants. The state currently allows municipalities and Boards of Education to purchase supplies and other goods through its state contracts to take advantage of the larger pool. Why not health insurance? Imagine if those savings could be passed on to taxpayers or reinvested into the schools to improve our children's education.

Health insurance is one of the biggest economic issues at the bargaining table. Local 2267 represents Bristol Board of Education school cafeteria employees, custodians, and paraprofessionals. Many of us live in and pay taxes in Bristol. Overcharging for health insurance hits us both as employees and as taxpayers. We hope that this bill can be amended to allow for municipalities and Boards of Education to take advantage of the same savings that the state has for its own employees.