

# C.M. SMITH AGENCY, LLC

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## Testimony Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee February 23, 2017

My name is John O'Connell and I'm president of C.M. Smith Agency, located at 100 Pearl Street, Hartford, Connecticut. We employ 23 professionals and we offer employee benefits brokerage and consulting services.

**Please support HB 7042**, An Act Controlling Consumer Health Care Costs and **HB 544**, An Act Requiring Prior Legislative Approval of Increases in Assessments And User Fees Charged By The Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange.

As a firm that works with many smaller employers across the state, I hear first-hand how difficult the rising cost of health insurance is on their businesses and their employees. The vast majority of the employers we work with contribute substantially to their employees' health insurance benefits. Our customers pride themselves on their ability to help make healthcare more affordable for their employees.

That's why it's important that every new benefit and/or service mandate placed on insurance coverage should be vetted before asking legislators to vote. It's critical that lawmakers have all of the necessary information before making decisions that could have long-lasting effects.

Additionally, it's important that our state's health insurance exchange require legislative approval before increasing fees and assessments. Our customers and their employees' are concerned about the rising cost of healthcare; anything that can help ease these burdens are more than welcome, especially when many of these same folks who are paying the fees do not participate in the state's health insurance exchange.

On behalf of my agency and the hundreds of small employers we work with, please support **HB 7042** and **HB 544** to help address the rising cost of healthcare.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective and for serving our great state.

Sincerely,

John F. O'Connell, Jr., CEBS, CLU  
President