

**Written Testimony
in Support of HB 5249, HB 5253 and SB 369**

Submitted by Joan Lane, 14 Pearl Hill Street, Milford 06460, 203.464.2374

Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, Representative Pavalock-d'Amato, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee,

My name is Joan Lane, and I am a registered voter in Milford since 1985. I work part-time at Southwest Community Health Center in Bridgeport, part-time at Naugatuck Valley Health District, and I teach an undergraduate course in Public Health at Southern Connecticut State University. However, I submit this testimony **in support of HB 5249, HB 5253 and SB 369** primarily as a community resident and a mother of two young adults who grew up in Connecticut.

My own children were very fortunate to have dental insurance – and as a result regular and excellent dental care – as they grew up. This gave them a sound foundation of good teeth, and good oral health habits, which they maintain today. When/if they have children, I'm sure the benefits they enjoyed will be handed down both in the form of good oral health and hygiene.

Not all children and young adults are so lucky. As we all know, access to and affordability of health care in general is not a given in our society – and oral health care, even less so. Somehow the insurance industry has managed to draw a distinct line between the health of the mouth and the health of the rest of the body. Oral health is often secondary, and seen as a luxury. The result can be disastrous.

I've worked in quite a few health care organizations in Connecticut, and have seen the incredible value of prioritizing dental care for children as young as 1 year old, and certainly into young adulthood. As coordinator of *Give Kids A Smile* programs, and a regular participant in the annual *Mission of Mercy* sponsored by the CT Foundation for Dental Outreach, I've seen people of all ages in desperate need of the free dental care provided through these programs.

I can't think of anything more important for our children than a chance at the good health that is a necessary foundation for a good life. Oral health care is a necessary ingredient. I urge your support for these bills, which ensure access to oral health care to age 26.

Thank you.

