



Testimony of Carmen LaSalle
Government Administration and Elections Committee Public Hearing

March 26, 2021

SB 1076 – An Act Concerning Public-Private Partnerships and Privatization of State Services at the University of Connecticut Health Center

Good evening Chairwoman Flexer, Chairman Fox, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Carmen LaSalle I am the Treasurer of AFSCME, Council 4 Local 196 which represents 450 state administrative-clerical workers in this region, including more than 275 staff at UConn Health.

The members of Local 196 are the administrative backbone of the UConn Health Center and are proud to work in Connecticut's only public hospital. We are often the first face that visitors see and interact with every function of the hospital.

For the last few years, our members have been at risk of being privatized and seeing our colleagues and friends' jobs lost in pursuit of reducing our public hospitals footprint. Despite this, they have continued to provide essential services to the public and working on the frontlines. Throughout Covid-19, UConn Health Center has continued being a vital part of providing healthcare, services, and comfort for people at a time when there was, and is, immense uncertainty. The ability of UConn Health Center to continue seeking proposals and pursuing privatization has only added uncertainty to employees who are proud of the work we do at our public hospital.

SB 1076 would provide a crucial protection for the public and to the UConn Health Center by requiring legislative approval before soliciting bids and pursuing privatization. Historically, UConn Health Center has acted as if they are exempt from oversight by the legislature when it comes to privatization or soliciting bids. This legislation would protect add a level of protection that currently doesn't exist for the public as well as the employees at UConn Health Center. We should not be allowing our public hospital to pursue privatization after the essential services that were provided throughout the last year without oversight by the legislature.

We urge you to support SB 1076 and support this legislation.

Thank you.