



Testimony of
Stephanie Rauch

Government Administration and Elections Committee
March 26, 2021

SB 1076 AAC Public-Private Partnerships and Privatization of State Services at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox and members of the Government Administration and Election Committee. My name is Stephanie Rauch and I am the Administrative Program Coordinator for The Graduate School at UConn Health and more specifically for the Biomedical Science PhD program. In addition to being an employee, I am also a patient at UConn Health. I am writing today to speak against pursuing the privatization of UConn Health's academic medical center. I am writing in support of SB 1076 AAC Public-Private Partnerships and Privatization of State Services at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

In life, we often find ourselves bemoaning our inability to accomplish certain things:

"I just don't have time to go to the gym every day!"
"If only I had the money to take a nice vacation!"

But nine times out of ten, the truth is that we simply prioritized other things.

We put our time, energy and finances into the things that are most important to us. On the flip side, we send a message with our *lack of support* about what is NOT important to us.

It is easy, for example, to talk about anti-racism-- to say that we believe in diversity and equality. But if we do not back up those claims with our time and resources, these ideals become just more empty words at which cynical citizens rightly roll their eyes.

Similarly, it is easy to espouse our healthcare workers as "heroes"-- to say how much they are appreciated and how vital they are to us. But when push comes to shove, privatization tell us that while they may be 'superstars,' you'd rather not have them on your dime.

As we argue against privatization year after year, countless people—patients, students, employees—have strived to impress upon the legislature of the State of Connecticut the value and importance of the work of UConn Health and its mission to serve the public good.

We have talked to you over and over about the value of our academic medical center, and its dental, medical and graduate schools.

We have emphasized the service to vulnerable patient populations like those on Medicaid, including my own mother, who found herself on Medicaid after one unfortunate fall in her apartment wiped out her entire savings. In fact, nearly one in four patients seen at UConn Health are Medicaid recipients.

In the past year, we've had the added bonus of facing a global pandemic, the likes of which almost no one alive today has witnessed.

We've been on the front lines, before we even knew where the lines were and what they meant to the safety and well being of ourselves, our co-workers, and our families.

We've been behind the scenes, facilitating statewide testing, mobilizing contact tracing, diving into research, and expanding the science.

We've been educating our students, our colleagues, our fellow citizens, and ourselves.

We've led by example, like the state's only academic medical center should. Like we have been doing all along. Like we will continue to do.

And yet, here we are, yet again. It is difficult to fathom what more we could possibly say, what more we could possibly do, to somehow prove to you our value and worth.

Let me be blunt: the fact that I am writing this to you today tells me all I need to know about ***those among you who continually push for privatization of the only public academic medical center in our state.***

You DO NOT CARE about the vital work that we do here and the lives that are impacted every day by researchers, dentists, and doctors we train and the medical care we provide.

You DO NOT CARE about our vulnerable citizens on Medicaid like my mother, whose very survival when she was alive literally depended on her utilizing Medicaid and the providers like UConn Health that accepted it.

Despite the importance of scientific research that has been underscored so dramatically in the past year, you DO NOT CARE about supporting cutting edge bioscience research.

You DO. NOT. CARE.

I urge you to re-prioritize the health and well-being of the residents of our state, to SHOW YOU CARE, by stepping away from the privatization scenario for UConn Health once and for all.

Show our healthcare heroes that you can be a hero, too. Through their dedication and care, they have show us every day that they have our backs. Show them that you have theirs.