

**Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Tuesday, February 9**

**Senate Bill 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut -
Support**

Senator Lesser, Representative Wood, Senator Hwang, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson, and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents over 11,000 workers employed in the public and private sector, as well as over 11,500 retirees. I submit this testimony on behalf of our members.

For decades, CSEA members have fought to expand access to quality, affordable health insurance for all residents of Connecticut. Our members were instrumental in creating the State Employee Health Plan and developing cost-saving and lifesaving measures like the Health Enhancement Program (HEP). The State Employee Health Plan, which serves both active and retired state workers, covers hundreds of thousands of lives and avoids the pitfalls of massive yearly premium increases. The HEP has saved lives and dollars by prioritizing a preventive approach to health care. CSEA members have also been tireless advocates for the creation and expansion of the municipal health care Partnership Plan, which has brought significant savings to towns throughout our state.

But for whatever progress we have made in helping some people achieve the needed protection of health insurance, too many in our state continue to be priced out of the market. Our healthcare system is broken, but SB 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut, is the step we need to take to fix it.

It is wrong that in the richest state in the richest country on the planet, 51% of our neighbors struggle to afford their health care, and 43% of adults reported putting off care because of cost.¹ When workers are sick and unable to get the treatment they need, they suffer, their families suffer, and our state's economy suffers. On a personal level, as someone who has been battling systemic lupus for most of my adult life, I can truly say that without the quality healthcare provided by my employer so I could get the care I needed when it was most critical, I might not be here to provide testimony to you today.

And, as we continue to live through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of our first priorities must be ensuring that our healthcare system is open and responsive to the needs of all our state's residents.

The public health care options in this bill, to be administered by the Comptroller, will give businesses and nonprofits needed choice in a healthcare market that is filled with expensive plans that provide limited coverage. The experience and expertise gained by administering the State Employee Health Plan will allow the Comptroller to develop an efficient, effective, and compassionate alternative that will bring about needed competition in our healthcare system.

I thank you for hearing my testimony. I urge the members of the committee to support Senate Bill 842.

Stephen Anderson
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001

¹ Altarum's 2020 Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey (CHES) - <https://www.healthcarevaluehub.org/advocate-resources/connecticut-consumer-healthcare-experience-state-survey>.