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February 9th, 2021
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Madison
SEIU 1199NE
Before the Insurance and
Real Estate Committee

In Support of SB 842: AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTHCARE IN CONNECTICUT

Good Afternoon Senator Lesser, Representative Wood, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate committee. My name is Nicole Bongiovanni and I am a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) living in Madison, CT. I am here today to testify in support of SB 842.

I live and work in Madison and Guilford, caring for three consumers as a PCA. It takes a special type of person to do the work I do. Not everyone is capable of it, but I can truly say I love my job. I enjoy caring for others and I find fulfillment knowing I am helping my consumers live normal lives.

With that said my job comes with plenty of challenges. It is difficult work, and I currently must work 73 hours a week between my three consumers to make ends meet. Working as much as I do puts strain on your body. Last June I had a mild heart attack, which resulted in me staying in the hospital for three days. Without health insurance this stay left me with a \$23k bill, and a \$2,500 ambulance bill. I am now making payments to pay that off. Furthermore, my doctor has urged me to get regular checkups to prevent this from happening again, but I cannot afford it.

As a PCA I am not offered health insurance through my job, and I cannot afford private health insurance plans due to the outrageous out of pocket cost of premiums and deductibles. This has left me incredibly vulnerable. I cannot afford to work less, nor can I afford preventative health measures. So I am left worrying about the next health crisis and the financial crisis it is sure to bring.

If Connecticut had a public option, I would be able to live and work with peace of mind. I would be able to dedicate myself to my consumers and provide them the care they need, knowing that when I need care I could afford it. It is past time that Connecticut take action on a health insurance market that condemns people like me to lives of worry and medical debt. Please do the right thing and pass this bill, so everyone in Connecticut can have access to high quality and high value health care. Please support SB 842.

Thank you for your time.