

Testimony
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 9, 2021
In support of SB 842 AAC Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut

Joelle Fishman, Chair, Connecticut Communist Party USA

Senator Lesser, Rep Wood, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee,

My name is Joelle Fishman, I live at 17 Hobart Street in New Haven, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Communist Party in favor of SB 842 to provide public options for equitable and affordable health care coverage.

As the horrors of COVID – 19 have exposed, our health care system is woefully inadequate. No one should be left behind without healthcare. The racial disparities for infection and for death from the virus make it clear that not only are thousands of people unprotected, but that there is even less protection in Black, Latinx and Native communities.

The proposal for a public option is not new. But it is long overdue. States have been left on their own, and we in Connecticut must take action in this legislative session to pass Public Options that are equitable and affordable.

From our neighborhood organizing, we are keenly aware of the fact that the immigrant community has been cruelly stranded and left to its own mutual aid during this pandemic. The public option must serve all Connecticut residents. If a section of the population is shut out of health care there is no safety for anyone against the virus. We also support the Husky for Immigrants campaign led by immigrant youth and the immigrant community.

The Public Options in SB 842 address the health care crisis and also the crisis of racial inequities in healthcare. This bill is a big step forward to save lives, enable job mobility, assist retirees, and boost our economy. It is not the whole answer. To fully achieve health care as a human right we need a national health service in our country. Connecticut can be a national example.

We appreciate the intensive work that has been done to produce this bill and respond to the 71% of people in our state who support Public Options.

We urge this committee and the full legislature to act in a speedy manner and pass SB 842.