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Audrey Patterson, Program Aide
Whole Life
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 Audrey Patterson and I live in Vernon, CT. I have been a Program Aide at Whole Life for 31 years, and I have worked in a similar position at Network for almost 11 years now. I am here today to testify in support of SB 842.

At Whole Life and Network, I work with people with mental and physical disabilities. I enjoy my work because I make a difference in other people's lives. I have developed very close relationships with the individuals I care for and I really enjoy working with them to develop life skills and help them live quality lives.

This year, my work became much harder. The pandemic put a whole other face on the risk that essential workers like me are taking. We have never had the privilege to stay home for work. The population of people that depend on us will continue to depend on us. So, for essential workers who are putting our lives and our family lives on the line, it is so important that we have access to affordable health insurance. To not have health insurance that is dependable and affordable is insulting.

For example, insurance through Whole Life is somewhat affordable but the deductible is extremely high. On the Individual plan, my deductible is \$3,500, and my premium is over \$300 a month. For those of us with medical conditions and non-stop medical bills, that can get pricey. I myself have Rheumatoid Arthritis and thyroid issues. Any medical procedures and tests associated with these are expensive. Eventually these costs add up. When you put off a medical bill because you can't afford it, but your health continues to deteriorate you then have an even bigger bill on your hands or worse.

I make too much money to be on Husky because Husky plans require you to be living in poverty to access. That's not a bad thing, but there is a large population of workers like me who cannot afford our employer based health insurance, but make too much money to afford to be on Husky or other forms of state insurance. We are one of the populations that the public option targets. SB 842 would and be a step toward a fairer system for all. Expanding access to healthcare and lowering costs will put more money in the pockets of hardworking people like me. Please support SB 842. Thank you for your time.