

February 9, 2021

Dear Senator Lesser, Representative Wood and Members of Insurance and Real Estate of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Nicholas Teeling and I am from Winsted, Connecticut. I support S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care In Connecticut.

S.B. 842 will make health care equitable, dependable, and affordable by creating new public options for health insurance in our state.

Tomorrow, February 10, 2021, I will be having surgery to relieve pain in my left hand. The only way this surgery is financially possible is because 15 years ago my mother made the selfless decision to forgo her dream of owning a pastry shop, and continued to work a job she did not enjoy because of the healthcare plan.

Growing up I remember watching my mom, a CT DDS employee since she was 17, work incredibly hard towards her dream of opening a small bakery in Northwest Connecticut. After work, she would take classes at the local culinary institute. I remember seeing the incredible creations she would make out of just flour, sugar and elbow grease. It was so uplifting to see your mom truly happy after working years at a job she did not prefer.

When I was around 10 years old, my parents decided to make my mom's dream a reality and open a store, the Foothills Delery, in New Hartford. At the time, I remember seeing how happy and proud my parents were. I started to really believe that maybe one day I could make my dreams happen too.

Three stressful, hard, painful and exhausting years later my parents sold the store and my mom gave up her dream and returned to a job she did not enjoy.

Why?

Because the 'health care' system in our State and Country prioritizes profits over people.

My brother had a rare seizure disorder while we were growing up. He required different brain specialists and medications in order to reduce the number of seizures he was having. In order to afford this cost, we needed a dependable health insurance plan. That meant my mom had to retain part time employment with the state.

To try and get her business off the ground and ensure my brother got the level of care he needed, my mom never stopped working. She would wake up at 3AM, work at the store until 9AM, work for the State until 3PM and then head back to the store to help close by 7PM. I did not see my mom much those 3 years but when I did, I did not see the same hopeful person. I

saw someone who was tired and defeated.

I know some 'experts' will say they have polling data that suggests small business owners do not want to see this bill pass. Looking through their findings, I see they did not ask small business owners how many hours they spend a week toiling away just to afford care. They did not ask them what compromises they are already making. They did not ask them how many hours away from their families they are spending to make their dreams a bearable reality.

A majority of voters (84%) in Connecticut believe making a change to our healthcare system as a result of COVID-19 is important and 7 in 10 voters support a public healthcare option. Offering public plans will provide quality, dependable, and affordable health coverage for workers and their families.

I urge the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers to support S.B. 842 this session to expand high-quality, dependable, and affordable health care by creating new public options for health insurance.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Teeling
Winsted, CT

CC: State Senator Craig Miner
State Representative Jay Case