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February 9, 2021
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St. Joseph's Manor, Trumbull
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 Zina Bennett and I am a Certified Nursing Assistant at St. Joseph's Manor in Trumbull, CT. I am also a proud 1199 delegate because through the union I have been able to have a voice in the workplace and at the Capitol. I am here today to testify in support of SB 842.

I currently live in Bridgeport with my two sons. I became a CNA because I believe in preserving the quality of life as best as I can. I value the work that I do and every day I try to make life for my residents as easy as it can be. My oldest son is only 13 years old and suffers from chronic asthma and some very complex GI problems. My son's asthma medication cost has gone up due to the change in condition and change in the type of medication's that he has to take. He now has to take two different types of medications. For one of them the cost is \$120 for a 30 day supply and now the pharmacy says that the doctor has to make the prescriptions out for a 90 day supply only. The other medication has a cost of \$30. As for myself I've been diagnosed with seizure disorder in the past two years. My seizure medication cost is \$70 for a 30 day supply. I cannot afford that much for medicines on the salary I'm making, and yet, both my son and I need these medications to survive.

My employer, Genesis, recently switched their healthcare plan again, but my children and I are still not able to see all of the doctors that we need to. For one, the copays are still not good at all. For example, it costs me \$55 to see my primary care doctor and \$60 to see a specialist. I can continue to go on, but I do believe that you get my point. There is no way that I can afford to pay out of pocket and for the cost of medications for my son and myself on top of my regular household expenses. If I could leverage a larger insurance pool, or join the state employees' health plan, I would be able to afford the lifesaving medications that I and my children need.

If Connecticut had a public option, I would be able to afford to see any doctor of my choice. I also could have a very low co pay and affordable health coverage. This plan would provide the engines of our state economy – workers, families, small businesses and nonprofits – access to high quality and high value health care. That will ensure my **family** is not jeopardized if I or family member falls ill. Please support SB 842. Thank you for your time.