

Testimony Before the Human Services Committee

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New Haven, Connecticut

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Greetings madam Co-Chairs Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee; I am writing to express my support for the following bills:

- [S.B. 1056](#) = AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
- [S.B. 1057](#) = AN ACT CONCERNING NURSING HOMES

S.B. 1056 - AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

This bill would serve to further increase coverage to qualified uninsured persons of Connecticut under 65 with income <200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). The highest percentage of uninsured people in Connecticut lie within the [100-199%](#) FPL range, making S.B. 1056 a purposeful step in the right direction. In terms of market dynamics imparted on the uninsured, Connecticut has one of the most consolidated individual insurance markets, being almost [20%](#) more concentrated than the US average. This could also help explain the high uninsured rate relative to the other FPL ranges, with this lack of competition being transferred to beneficiaries in the form of pricing. As it follows, Connecticut has some of the [highest](#) percentages of individual employee contributions to premiums among New England states. Connecticut must rise to the challenge of an increasingly [consolidated](#) health system, especially in light of the pandemic.

S.B. 1057 - AN ACT CONCERNING NURSING HOMES

This bill would charge the Department of Public Health with establishing minimum staffing levels with emphasis on the composition of direct care. Connecticut has one of the oldest populations in the nation according to the FY21-23 [State Plan on Aging](#) and I believe S.B. 1057 aligns with objective 5 of the elder rights strategic goal of Connecticut's State Unit on Aging (SUA). There is a fairly generous thread of literature regarding staffing levels in nursing homes as it relates to quality. There is peer reviewed [evidence](#) supporting the using of staffing standards to bolster quality and mitigate deficiencies especially at the margin of tail end of the quality distribution. There is also literature suggesting differences in quality between for profit

and non-profit nursing homes and the relationship is believed to be mediated by [staffing levels](#). It has been documented that nursing homes have also become skilled at [gaming](#) inspections, weakening the credibility of federal reports on quality and staffing. Lastly, the final report from [Mathematica](#) in late 2020 recommended addressing staffing levels. S.B. 1057 helps to bolster the health and experience of nursing home residents of Connecticut.

I strongly support S.B. 1056 and S.B. 1057, while also urging the committee to favorably vote these bills out of committee.

Thank You,

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