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Zina Bennett, CNA
St. Joseph's Manor, Trumbull
SEIU 1199NE
Before the Insurance and
Real Estate Committee

In Support of SB 346: AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC OPTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE IN CONNECTICUT

Good Afternoon Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, 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 346.

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 everyday I try to make life for my residents as easy as it can be. My oldest son is only 12 years old and suffers from chronic asthma and some very complex GI problems. My son's asthma medication alone is a sixty five dollar co pay. As for myself I been diagnosed with seizure disorder in the past two years. My seizure medicine 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 overnight so that almost all Yale New Haven providers are now out of network. This change affects the health of my children and myself because all of the doctors and specialists that we need to see we can't under this current insurance. Most of the doctors and specialists in the area are Yale New Haven, and my sons and I have had to find new doctors and specialists that are cheaper and inside the network. And I absolutely cannot afford to pay out of my pocket. There is no way that I can afford that. If I could leverage a larger insurance pool, or join the state employees health plan, I would be able to afford the life saving medication 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 346. Thank you for your time.