

SEIU Local 511



CONNECTICUT EMPLOYEES UNION INDEPENDENT

P.O. Box 1268
Middletown, CT 06457

Testimony by Carl Chisem, President
Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511
S.B. 346 AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC OPTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE IN CONNECTICUT
Insurance & Real Estate Committee
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Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon and distinguished members of the Insurance & Real Estate Committee. My name is Carl Chisem and I am President of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511. We represent over 6,000 active and retired blue collar maintenance and service State workers. Our members provide valuable services within our state facilities. They cook, clean, repair, maintain and deliver in Connecticut's State buildings, hospitals, college campuses, airports, roads, bridges and parks. They represent the true diversity of our great State.

I submit this testimony in support of S.B. 346 – An Act Concerning Public Options for Health Care in Connecticut. S.B. 346 authorizes the Comptroller to establish the "ConnectHealth Plan" by creating new health plan options for small businesses, nonprofits and unions with multi-employer Taft-Hartley plans, all of which face major difficulties in providing affordable, high-quality health care options to their employees. Without decent health insurance options, small businesses and nonprofits have difficulties finding and/or retaining skilled workers as they are not able to compete with the benefit packages that corporations are able to provide. The high deductible plans they can offer provide no benefit as if they are paying for nothing.

S.B. 346 would allow small businesses and nonprofits to have access to high-quality health care plans that are affordable with no high deductibles. Multiple plan options would be available to align with their budgets and specific benefit needs. No long-term commitment would be required, dental insurance would be included and, with the ability to leverage the market power of the state employee plan, costs would be stabilized. It is a voluntary option made available to those who currently find costs of coverage excessive.

With no health insurance, individuals cannot access the healthcare they need when they need it. This ultimately leads to higher costs for everyone. Enacting the "ConnectHealth Plan" would, not only make affordable plans available to those who need insurance but, provide small businesses and nonprofits the opportunity to succeed.

I urge the Committee to support S.B. 346.

Thank you.