



CAFCA

Connecticut Association
for Community Action

March 5, 2020 Public Hearing Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly's Insurance & Real Estate Committee

In Support of

Senate Bill 346: An Act Concerning Public Options for Health Care in Connecticut

Board of Directors

Peter DeBiasi

Access Community
Action Agency, Inc.

**Dr. Monette
Ferguson**

Action for Bridgeport
Community
Development, Inc.
(ABCD)

Amos Smith

Community Action
Agency of New
Haven, Inc. (CAANH)

Michelle James

Community Action
Agency of Western
CT, Inc. (CAAWC)

Lena Rodriguez

Community Renewal
Team, Inc. (CRT)

Rocco Tricarico

Human Resources
Agency of New
Britain, Inc. (HRA)

Dr. James Gatling

New Opportunities,
Inc. (NOI)

Deborah Monahan

Thames Valley
Council for
Community Action,
Inc. (TVCCA)

David Morgan

TEAM, Inc.

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members, my name is Deb Polun and I am the new Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA), the state association that works with Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federal designated antipoverty agencies.

I am here to express our support for Senate Bill 346, *An Act Concerning Public Options for Health Care in Connecticut*.

Every year, Community Action Agencies work with 259,500 low- and moderate-income people across Connecticut – including your constituents – to connect them to essential services like energy assistance, job training, child care, Meals on Wheels, SNAP, and housing. Through a comprehensive, customer-focused service delivery system approach called the Human Services Infrastructure, or HSI, any person that comes through our doors gets connected to the tools, resources, programs, and services they need to move towards short and long-term economic security.

In addition to being service providers, Community Action Agencies are employers, with 1,544 full time employees across the state. Separately, our agency – CAFCA – employs five full time individuals. With rising health care costs and stagnant budgets, Community Action Agencies, CAFCA, and other nonprofits – especially those with only a few employees — are struggling to provide their staff with reasonably priced health insurance options. And, they face recruitment and retention challenges because they cannot compete with corporate benefit packages.

S.B. 346, *The Connecticut Plan*, proposes creating new health plans for small business and nonprofits featuring quality doctors and providers at an affordable cost. S.B. 346 will help create new health insurance options for nonprofits of any size, allowing them to select the plan that aligns the best with their budget and benefit needs.

CAA staff work day in and day out to stabilize and improve lives and communities in every city and town in Connecticut. These dedicated, hardworking, skilled employees deserve a health plan that works for them, not against them. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you and the Administration to continue to serve Connecticut's most at-risk and vulnerable residents.