



**Testimony of Ted Doolittle
Office of the Healthcare Advocate
Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Re SB 1044
March 18, 2021**

Good afternoon, Senator Lesser, Representative Wood, Senator Hwang, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. For the record, I am Ted Doolittle, Healthcare Advocate for the State of Connecticut. The Office of the Healthcare Advocate ("OHA") is an independent state agency with a consumer-focused mission: assuring consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health plans; assisting consumers in disputes with their health insurance carriers; and informing legislators and regulators regarding problems that consumers are facing in accessing care, and proposing solutions to those problems.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit comment regarding SB 1044, An Act Establishing A Task Force To Study Insurance And Health Care In This State. OHA believes that further study of health care and health insurance is always warranted, given the enormous complexity of those topics and their impacts on the overall wellness and prosperity of all Connecticut residents. In order to ensure that any task force formed pursuant to SB 1044 includes the strongest consumer voice possible, OHA requests that this bill be revised to include the Healthcare Advocate or his/her designee as an *ex officio* member of the task force.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this testimony on this very important topic. If you have any questions concerning our position on this issue, please feel free to contact me at Ted.Doolittle@ct.gov.