



Testimony Regarding H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning the State Budget for Human Services

Testimony on behalf of Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Submitted by Ann Pratt, Director of Organizing
Before the Appropriations Committee
Wednesday, March 3rd 2021

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan and members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Ann Pratt and I am the Organizing Director of CT Citizen Action Group, a statewide membership organization committed to a more just and equitable Connecticut and I also serve as the Co-Chair of the Medicaid Strategy Group, a coalition of Connecticut Medicaid advocates.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding the Governor's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget for Human Services.

The overlapping crisis of a global pandemic, the relentless persistence of ugly and virulent systemic racism, massive economic disparities inequities- and the ever-present reality of our current climate crisis- all conspire to leave our future health and survival hanging in the balance.

Access to quality, affordable health care has always been important to the quality of life and well-being for children, families and communities- but the global pandemic has intensified its significance and necessity- particularly for Black and Brown communities.

Before the pandemic, Connecticut's overall uninsured rate was 5.3%, but it reached 6.8% for Black residents and 13.1% for Hispanic or Latino residents. Today, the pandemic is sickening and killing Black, Latino and Native Americans at higher rates than whites, reflecting and compounding health care disparities that have long gone unaddressed.

The moment of need is extraordinary. Our response as a state must meet those needs- above and beyond what we have done in past years.

It is deeply disturbing that the Governor's Proposal falls so short of meeting this moment- particularly at a time when there are 17 billionaires in our state that have *increased* their

wealth by close to \$4 billion in the span of 10 months. Such a proposal during a time of such dire need is not only immoral, but is also bad policy.

We strongly urge the members of this committee, and members of the CT General Assembly to amend this budget to include:

- Increasing HUSKY A and D eligibility limits to 201% FPL so that lower income adults can access quality, affordable, health care
- Create access to HUSKY programs for all income-eligible immigrants
- Remove the asset test added to the Medicaid Savings Program
- Restore cost of living increases for Connecticut's lowest income residents

Connecticut has one of the best Medicaid programs in the country in large part due to common sense, innovative public policy solutions that have successfully reduced administration cost at the same time as ensuring quality, dependable health care services for low-income parents, elderly residents and those with disabilities. This high performing cost effective public good needs to be provided to all of Connecticut residents who are in need of these essential services.