

CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP

30 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106

March 1, 2018

**INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
TESTIMONY ON HB 5210**

An Act Mandating Insurance Coverage of Essential Health Benefits

Good afternoon, Senator Larson, Senator Kelly, Representative Scanlan, Representative Sampson and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

My name is Ann Pratt, Director of Organizing for CT Citizen Action Group- a statewide organization committed to putting people first and ensuring all CT residents have access to quality, affordable health care.

On behalf of the 8,000 members we represent throughout the state of Connecticut- we urge you to support HB 5210 which mandates insurance coverage of essential health benefits and expands health benefits for woman, children and adolescents.

This bill is crucial in protecting and ensuring that all CT residents have access to basic health care coverage and services- particularly the 18,000+ low-income parents who lost their Medicaid coverage in 2016 due to income eligibility changes enacted – as well as the 13,500 additional HUSKY A parents impacted by the most recent 2017 lowering of income eligibility levels. While many of these parents will not be able to afford insurance offered by Access Health CT- those who are able to purchase plans need to have products that provide basic core services such as maternity care, substance abuse and mental health services.

With the federal protections of these essential benefits provided through the ACA are at risk, it is crucial these protections be preserved and codified for CT health consumers. To re-state and amplify the testimony provided by Karen Siegal from CT Voices for Children- prior to these essential federal protections- “34 percent of enrollees had not coverage for substance abuse services, 18 percent had not coverage for mental health services and 62 percent had no maternity coverage.” (March 1st, 2018 CT Voices Testimony). The ACA protections have provided invaluable protections for CT health care consumers and need to be protected and codified into state law for the benefit of CT residents.

We urge this committee to ensure that health plans covering CT residents continue to provide coverage for essential health care services regardless of changes or repeal of current federal protections through the ACA.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ann Pratt, CCAG