

## **CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP**

30 Arbor Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

March 8, 2018

### **TESTIMONY TO HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OPPOSING SB 270- An Concerning Work and Community Service Requirements for Recipients of Certain Public Assistance Program**

Good afternoon, Representative Abercrombie, Senators Moore and Markley, and other members of the Human Services 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.

We are testifying today in strong opposition to SB 270, the bill imposing work requirements on Medicaid enrollees and barring DSS from seeking waivers of work requirements for SNAP.

This bill violates the core values of this state and demonstrates a disturbing lack of knowledge by those on this committee who proposed this legislation of the CT residents who use and need this essential- life-saving health care program.

The majority of Medicaid enrollees are already working or are individuals who will be exempt from the work requirements produced under this bill. We anticipate- and has been the case in other states who have implemented such measures- that tens of thousands of individuals who are actually *eligible* for Medicaid will lose their health care. People with disabilities who are disproportionately more likely to lose benefits as a result of work requirements because they won't understand they qualify for an exemption- or if they do they will struggle with providing and submitting the necessary paperwork proving they qualify.

For those who are not exempt and comply with the work requirements- they will be put at risk of losing coverage due to fluctuation of work hours month to month- and the significant barriers low-income adults face with monthly verification of requirements. And, even if these individuals are able to submit the proper paper work, DSS is already unable to process paperwork in a timely way- resulting in eligible working individuals potentially losing coverage due to these administrative issues.

The primary effect of work requirements will be less access to care, worse health outcomes and less financial security. According to a February 2018 policy brief from the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities-states currently enacting work requirements- such as Kentucky- estimates that 15% of all adult Medicaid enrollees will lose coverage due to work

requirements. Studies have shown – time and again- that the expansion of Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act increased access to health care, improved health outcomes and improved enrollees financial security.

SB 270 threatens to reverse the positive advances made by our expansion of Medicaid in our state- and imposes needless, harmful requirements on parents, elderly and persons with disabilities.

Why would we want to threaten or enact legislation that reverses these positive outcomes for our state?

We also strongly oppose the provision in this bill that would prohibit DSS from requesting a waiver of the work requirements for individuals to qualify for SNAP—a 100% federally funded benefit which costs taxpayers nothing but does prevent many families in Connecticut from going to bed hungry.

This bill is destructive and cruel. It is an attack children, families and communities.

We urge members of this committee to reject this bill.

Thank you.

Ann Pratt, CCAG