

CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP

30 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106

February 21, 2018

TESTIMONY ON HB 5035 APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CALLING FOR RESTORATION OF 2017 MEDICAID

Good evening, Senators Osten and Formica, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations 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 restore all of the cuts to the Medicaid program made in the October 2017 bipartisan budget- including creating a permanent fix to the Medicare Savings Program- impacting the health care coverage of 113,000 low-income seniors and persons with disabilities; the reductions in eligibility to the HUSKY A program resulting in 13,500 low income parents losing access to health care- and also posing a threat to their children's continued coverage; reversing the \$1,000 dental cap for adult Medicaid recipients; and preventing the proposed Medicaid primary care rate reductions from being enacted- which will more than likely result in a significant reduction in primary care physicians.

The evidence establishing the importance of ensuring that children, families and elderly have access to quality, affordable health care is substantial, demonstrating that access to health care services reduces stress, improves regular use of preventive care, reduces costly use of ER as primary care services – and significantly improves health outcomes compared to those who are regularly without health insurance.

Connecticut has been an exemplary model for ensuring broad and relatively generous access to health care coverage for its residents. CT was the very first state to expand under the ACA- resulting in an additional 217,000 adults receiving health coverage over these past years. CT is a state that has one of the most efficient, cost effective Medicaid programs in the country- as expertly articulated in the testimony provided by Greater New Haven Legal Aide attorney- Sheldon Toubman. CT's Medicaid is a jewel in our crown- and one that touches the lives of 800,000 people in this state. It is that we expand and build this program, not undermine it.

We understand that the state faces serious financial challenges- and the solutions for addressing these challenges run the gamut- from recommendations put forth by the newly created corporate run "austerity commission"- proposing such ill advised proposals such as privatizing state properties, to the other side of the spectrum proposing a commonsense

solution of CT residents allowed to buy into the Medicaid program- while not perfect- it is a solution that has a goal that is designed to protect, expand and strengthen CT's signature Medicaid program.

We are fully aware that full restoration of the CT Medicaid 2017 cuts will require a robust commitment to revenue. There are abundant and viable revenue options that this body can and should consider- including the revenue options put forth by CT Voices for Children- along with additional progressive options that have been proposed such as a fee on second homes, legalization of recreational marijuana, institution of a low wage employer fee and tolls. Any combination of these solutions will more than adequately allow this state to continue its journey towards creating a CT that works for all of us, not just a few.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ann Pratt
CCAG