



March 7, 2008

Senator Edith G. Prague
Representative Kevin Ryan
LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **House Bill 5536 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE
CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP**

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and Committee Members;

My name is Julie Cinnamon, and I work as a public school paraprofessional at Fairfield Woods Middle School in the Fairfield School District. Among many duties and responsibilities, I facilitate, re-teach, train, encourage, modify for, write task analysis, and record observations on students each and every day. I also spend a period of each day working one-one with a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

I also am a member of CSEA/SEIU 2001 and I join with fellow members in our union who are urging you to **support House Bill No. 5536, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership.**

The Partnership is our best opportunity in 17 years to join the ranks of 24 other states that "pool" public service workers together in a single health plan to reduce overall costs, expand coverage, and help offset property taxes.

In my own personal situation, I am enrolled in the Board of Ed's employer-provided healthcare insurance, with a plan that covers one of my children, my husband, and myself. I pay \$5,771.00 per year, and the Board of Education pays the difference for a total annual cost of \$23,085.00. Similar "family" plans the state has negotiated are about \$5,400.00 less per year.

After ten years of working as a paraprofessional, my salary has hardly kept pace with increases in my taxes and health insurance costs. At the end of the day, I earn less than the equivalent of a living wage, and approximately a third of my salary is spent on my family's health insurance. That is why I believe making healthcare more affordable for more workers is a good thing!

Our union's members are committed to reforming our state's health care system, and believe "pooling" public service workers in a single plan will take us a step toward achieving the goal of single-payer universal healthcare for all Connecticut residents.

Michael J. O'Brien
President

Patrice Peterson
Secretary/Treasurer

Robert D. Rinker
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I thank you for the opportunity to share my views with your Committee, and urge you to pass HB 5536, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership, on to the full General Assembly.

Julie Cinammon

Paraprofessional, Fairfield Public Schools

Co-Vice President, Chapter 119, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001