



Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State
Connecticut

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For more information:
Av Harris: (860) 509-6255
Cell: (860)463-5939

-PRESS RELEASE -

BYSIEWICZ TO RELL: SIGN LANDMARK HEALTH INSURANCE BILLS AND SAVE SMALL BUSINESSES AND MUNICIPALITIES MILLIONS

SECRETARY OF THE STATE URGES GOVERNOR TO SUPPORT CT HEALTHCARE
PARTNERSHIP, SUSTINET BILLS TO HELP REVIVE CT ECONOMY

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz is thrilled the Connecticut State Senate Saturday passed H.B. No. 6600, An Act Concerning the Establishment of the SustiNet Plan and the CT Healthcare Partnership contained in H.B. No. 6582, an Act Concerning Expanded Access to the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan. Secretary Bysiewicz is also calling on Governor Rell to immediately sign these bills into law. H.B. 6582 aims to reduce health care costs to municipalities, small businesses (fewer than fifty employees) and not-for-profits by permitting them to voluntarily join the state employee insurance pool.

“As President Obama has said, there can be no economic recovery without fundamentally reforming our healthcare system,” said Bysiewicz. “My office is recording record-breaking numbers of businesses shutting down in Connecticut, and health care is one of the highest costs facing entrepreneurs. So it is obvious that the small businesses who are the backbone of our economy and have created more than 90% of all new jobs in Connecticut in the last decade now need our help to continue to prosper. Both the SustiNet plan and the CT Healthcare Partnership will save taxpayers and businesses millions while providing a strong network of affordable, quality coverage for hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents who are currently uninsured. I urge Governor Rell to sign these bills into law and make Connecticut a leader in healthcare reform.”

As the state's chief business registrar, Secretary of the State Bysiewicz joined lawmakers in leading a series of roundtable discussions with entrepreneurs throughout Connecticut to discuss the bills and their potential impact on the economy and individual businesses.

“Every day, entrepreneurs are faced with the tough choice of either not providing health coverage for their employees, or laying off some employees in order to be able to afford healthcare for other employees,” Bysiewicz said. “No entrepreneur or head of a non-profit providing critical services in our community should have to make that choice. Health coverage is an important tool to recruit and retain quality employees which further helps our economy and stabilizes families. More than half of the uninsured population in Connecticut are employees of small businesses, and would receive coverage if these two bills were signed into law. I urge the governor to do the right thing for small business and working families in Connecticut.”

The Health Insurance Policy Council in its 2007 report “A Framework for Health Care Reform for Connecticut” cites that 52.2% of uninsured workers and dependents are in firms with less than 50 employees which confirms that a large part of Connecticut’s uninsured population is found with small employers. A recently released Families USA report found that 758,000 people lacked health insurance in Connecticut at some time in during the years of 2007-2008. A previous projection of 360,000 uninsured Connecticut residents only represented people who lacked coverage for the entire year, while the Families USA report represents numbers of people who are uninsured for shorter periods of time.