



NEWS

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Service Employees International Union

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHILDREN RALLY FOR THEIR HEALTH CARE

– House Speaker, State Legislators Commit to Overriding Governor’s Veto of Health Care Bill –

Hartford, CT – The families of cleaners who work in Connecticut’s state buildings and universities rallied to save their health care at the Capitol this afternoon. House Speaker Donovan and several state legislators spoke in support of the children and their families and committed to overriding the Governor’s veto of the bill that would keep them insured. Without this override, 350 children will lose their health care coverage on August 1, 2009 because state agencies are underfunding their parents’ benefits.

“This bill would save children’s health care and save Connecticut money,” said Kurt Westby, 32BJ Connecticut Director. “Connecticut shouldn’t be in the business of kicking children off their health care and forcing them on to the overburdened public health program.”

House Bill 6502, An Act Concerning the Standard Wage for Certain Connecticut Workers, would amend the state’s Standard Wage Law, which governs the wages and benefits for nearly 600 cleaners of state-owned buildings and facilities. The changes to the bill include measures that would ensure cleaners maintain health care coverage for their families and reduce starting wages for cleaners. Despite strong bi-partisan votes in the House and the Senate during the regular legislative session, Governor Rell vetoed the bill on July 2.

“By vetoing this bill, the Governor squandered an important opportunity to save money in the long term,” said Stamford Mayor Dan Malloy and potential candidate for Governor in 2010. “Aside from this being a financial issue, allowing hard-working men and women to be left without family health care coverage stands in sharp contrast with the values and standards upon which the people of Connecticut rely.”

HB 6502 is projected to save millions of tax-payer dollars. The preservation of health care benefits could prevent up to \$1.6 million dollars in added costs to public health programs like HUSKY. Additionally, a reduction in starting wage rates for cleaners is projected to save up to \$4.3 million over the next seven years.

“I depend on our health care coverage to keep my daughter’s diabetes under control,” said Diana Colorado, a cleaner at Norwalk Community College and mother of two teenage children. “We need all the Members of the General Assembly to come back and fight for our kids.”

Photos of some of the children who will lose their health care can be viewed at: http://seiu32bj.org/ne/ITN_CT_Health.asp.

With more than 110,000 members, including 4,400 in Connecticut, 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.

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