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**Written Testimony  
Comptroller Kevin Lembo  
March 1, 2018**

**Concerning**

**H.B. 5210: AN ACT MANDATING INSURANCE COVERAGE OF ESSENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS AND EXPANDING MANDATED HEALTH BENEFITS FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.**

Good morning Senator Larson, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, Representative Sampson, and Members of the Insurance Committee:

I write today in support of House Bill 5210. This legislation ensures that Connecticut's values are reflected in its health care system, removing barriers of entry and associated costs from critical health screenings for women, children and adolescents.

The future of federal requirements associated with the essential health benefits laid out in the Affordable Care Act and established by the Access Health Board is uncertain. It is important that Connecticut take steps now to put coverage for essential health benefits in statute so that patients covered by insurance plans in our state can have the peace of mind to know, that regardless of actions on the federal level, they will continue to have access to health care coverage that provides access to essential health benefits.

No one should be forced to choose between paying for necessary health care procedures and their everyday living expenses. Requiring coverage for preventive screenings, children's immunizations, pregnancy care, domestic violence counseling and the other provisions of this bill will ensure more Connecticut residents are receiving critical health care needs and continuing to contribute to our economy and our communities.

According to the National Women's Law Center, birth control access afforded under the ACA has meant that many women are no longer forced to choose between paying for birth control or other necessities, like groceries and utilities. Not only does this help their short-term financial stability, but it also makes it easier for them to plan whether and when to have children.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.