



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
In Support of HB 1228 – An Act to Establish a Public Health Insurance Option and
SB 500 – An Act Establishing a Public Health Insurance Option

By Judy Deutsch – LWVMA Health Care Specialist

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Although the passage and implementation of a Public Option bill would not provide as many benefits to individuals, businesses, communities and the Commonwealth as would passage of an Improved Medicare for All bill, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts recognizes that this is second best, and therefore, recommends that this Committee and then the entire Legislature establish a Public Option form of health care coverage should the General Court be unwilling to legislate Improved Medicare for All.

If passed and enacted, a Public Option will:

- create a public health insurance plan that will compete with private insurance plans to give consumers greater choice, increase competition, and encourage insurance companies to reduce costs and share information;
- charge the Connector Authority (under Massachusetts' present health insurance system) with establishing a public health insurance plan to be made available through the Connector. (A modest surcharge on insurance reserves would cover the start-up costs of the plan, and this surcharge would be paid back over time with revenues generated by the plan's premiums.); and
- provide a more economical choice for consumers and also encourage private insurers to provide comprehensive coverage at an affordable rate by avoiding some of the overhead that does not pay for health care.

Although the implementation of a Public Option would not provide the overall economies that Improved Medicare for All will, it will produce some economies and give consumers and the Commonwealth an opportunity to evaluate the costs and benefits of a public option.

Again, thank you for your time.