



Testimony to

**Senate Committee on Health and Assembly Committee
on Health**

***The New York Health Act
A.5248/S.3577***

Presented by

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My name is Heather Briccetti, President and CEO of the Business Council of New York State. On behalf of The Business Council and our more than 2,300 members – businesses large and small all across the state – I wish to submit these comments into the record as part of this committee’s hearing on a resolution in support of the New York Health Act.

As the state’s largest statewide employer advocacy organization, we often address issues impacting the state’s economic competitiveness, including business costs driven by state policy actions. The establishment of a government-run healthcare system in New York would undoubtedly impact every employer and have a deleterious effect on the economy of the state as a whole. In light of the barrage of rhetoric supporting such a government-run system, it’s useful to separate myth from fact.

Government-run health insurance is not synonymous with universal coverage. We know this because New York has nearly achieved universal coverage under the current health insurance structure. As of today, over 95 percent of New Yorkers have health care coverage. Of the remaining 4.5 percent, roughly half are eligible to receive coverage under existing plans and choose not to. The New York Health Act is a dangerous solution to a problem that does not truly exist. Furthermore, the current bill would be frighteningly expensive. Since neither the bill nor its sponsors have ever addressed the actual costs, multiple outside studies have been used to estimate them. The results are scary coming in at about \$250 billion per year, almost one and a half times the current state budget. These costs result in an unprecedented amount of guaranteed tax increases larger than any in history.

In addition to taxes, separate studies point to a potential loss of 150,000 jobs in the state.

Thankfully, polls show that despite the rhetoric, there is not some great groundswell of public opinion pushing for these changes. The fact is that other states have already tried this and failed under the enormity of the financial impact. Lawmakers in California proposed and ultimately rejected a similar plan when its true costs were revealed. Similar stories played out in Vermont and Colorado. Government-run healthcare advocates often point to universal coverage plans and mandates that exist in other countries as something worth emulating in New York. In fact, the majority of countries that offer universal coverage do so with a mix of private and public insurance; the exact same as our current system. But this proposed plan is far more extreme, outlawing private insurance all together.

Single payer systems throughout the world tend to have greater social inequalities in accessing care, based on wealth and other factors, than does the US. This will be exacerbated in underserved urban neighborhoods and rural areas under a New York single payer scheme, as falling reimbursement rates to hospitals will force poorer medical centers to shut their doors.

There are certainly problems with our current system and improvements to make. They can be done without reinventing the wheel and guaranteeing economic turmoil. This includes your own bill, “ S.3900 Essential Plan Undocumented Coverage”, which The Business Council continues to support, that would provide access to health insurance to the individuals who do not have access because of their immigration status. By doing this we believe we would achieve almost 100-percent healthcare coverage in New York State.

However, decimating our economy with massive tax increases and job losses while putting access to our health system in the hands of bureaucrats through government-run healthcare is

simply the worst way to approach it. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on this important issue and on behalf of The Business Council and our members.