

# The Connecticut General Assembly



For IMMEDIATE Release  
October 25, 2010

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## **FONTANA & CRISCO APPLAUD DECISION TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARING FOR ANTHEM'S 2011 RATE HIKES**

State Representative Steve Fontana (D-North Haven) and State Senator Joseph J. Crisco (D-Woodbridge), Co-Chairmen of the state legislature's Insurance & Real Estate Committee, applauded state Insurance Commissioner Thomas R. Sullivan's announcement that he would hold a public hearing on Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield's request for rate hikes in 2011.

"Anthem's rate increases deserve public scrutiny, and Connecticut's working families and small business owners deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns about them," said Fontana. "I welcome today's announcement by the Insurance Commissioner that he will hold a public hearing on them—Connecticut consumers and small business owners once again will be able to participate directly in the rate review process, and weigh in on how these premium increases would impact them."

"Insurance providers must explain and justify any rate increases at a time when so many residents and businesses struggle to make ends meet and they must do so in a much more public forum, so it's gratifying to know hearings will be held in conjunction with next year's rate increase requests," Crisco said. "The current system for rate increase approval lacks the voice of small business owners who want to maintain profitability as well as input from consumers or those who speak on behalf of consumers' interests. Going forward, I want to see the rate approval process characterized by the word 'transparency,' because excessive increases without ample evidence are by definition unjustified."

Fontana and Crisco both said that they hoped that Connecticut's Attorney General and Health Care Advocate will participate in this hearing, as they did last year.

Fontana added, "I look forward to having further discussions with the Commissioner and Senator Crisco on how to provide greater public transparency and accountability in this process, perhaps by revisiting legislation that we passed this year in the House to increase

disclosure of rate filing documentation and require a public hearing for rate increases under certain circumstances.”

Although Fontana’s legislation (House Bill 5090), which he introduced after Anthem proposed a 32% rate increase on individual policies in 2009, passed the House in April, it was not taken up by the State Senate for a vote before the legislative session ended for the year.

In Connecticut, the Insurance Commissioner may hold public hearings on proposed health insurance premium increases if he believes it is the public interest. The Insurance Commissioner has not released details about the date or location of the public hearing yet.

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