



NEWS FROM:

# SENATOR JOSEPH J. CRISCO, JR.

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REPRESENTING THE 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATORIAL DISTRICT

Chair: Insurance & Real Estate; Internship

Vice-Chair: Banks; Commerce

Member: Legislative Management

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## SEN. CRISCO, REP. FONTANA REQUEST HEARING TO WEIGH PROPOSED ANTHEM RATE INCREASES

Hartford – **State Senator Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.** (D-Woodbridge) and **Representative Steve Fontana** (D-North Haven), co-chairs of the legislature’s Insurance and Real Estate Committee, want the Anthem Blue Cross insurance company to defend its schedule of proposed rate increases at a formal public hearing. The insurance company applied for approval of rate increases – some reportedly as high as 32% – for tens of thousands of Connecticut residents, effective October 1.

The lawmakers registered their request in a letter to Thomas R. Sullivan, the state Department of Insurance commissioner, asking him to convene the hearing. The letter will be sent Friday, after rank-and-file committee members and other legislators have had a chance to co-sign it.

“We have noted with interest the growing calls for Anthem to withdraw its proposed rate increases for individual health insurance policies,” the lawmakers wrote. “Given the state of the economy, the growing number of uninsured or underinsured persons in our state, and the various state and federal efforts to reform our healthcare system, we believe that such increases could not come at a worse time for Connecticut residents who must rely on such policies.”

Governor Rell’s office issued a statement to say a public hearing is ‘warranted’ and Attorney General Richard Blumenthal has described the proposed increases as ‘outrageous.’ **Senator Crisco** and **Representative Fontana** hope Commissioner Sullivan and Anthem officials will heed the call for greater scrutiny of the need for such dramatically higher insurance premiums.

“Although, as we understand it, you are not required by law to conduct a public hearing on these proposed rate increases, we nevertheless would request, in this era of heightened interest in transparency and accountability, that the Insurance Department accommodate the many requests that it has received on this subject and hold a public hearing on the size of these proposed rate increases and, in fact, the need for them at all,” the lawmakers wrote to Commissioner Sullivan.

The state Department of Insurance regulates the industry in Connecticut, including the companies that sell insurance products and those products themselves, and approves or denies all applications for rate changes. **Senator Crisco** and **Representative Fontana** co-chair the legislative committee with cognizance over the state Department of Insurance.

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