

Small Business Health Coordinating Council

Meeting Minutes

9/17/07 8:30am

Attendees:

Lt. Governor Roberts

Senator Chuck Levesque

Don Nokes

Mark Deion

Doug Jobling

Craig O'Connor

Ted Almon

Jerry Meyer

Sid Goldman

Phil Papoojian

Linda Lulli

Richard Glucksman

Eli Zupnick

Lt. Governor Roberts called the meeting to order at 8:30am. She invited Ted Almon to introduce the first issue, the Coordinated Health Planning Act.

Ted Almon opened by saying that the current way the health care system is set up is not equitable to small business owners. He said that the makeup of the system allows for stakeholders in the process to defeat incremental reforms. He went on to say that the certificate of

need process is currently the only system in place to examine the costs in the system in a coordinated way. He said that the problem is that there is no blueprint in place to coordinate. The example that he gave of this is the MRI situation in the state, which he says demonstrates that the system does not work without a plan. He said that to address this, David Gifford appointed a task force chaired by Fox Wetle. This task force, the Coordinated Health Planning Task Force, came out with a consensus report that passed both houses in the legislature unanimously. The governor subsequently vetoed the legislation, claiming that an executive order will be issued in its stead.

Craig O'Connor then spoke on the issue. He said that this legislation is important not just for what it is, but also for what it represents. He said that 38 individuals from various segments of the health care world came together in consensus on this report. He said that out of this report came legislation creating a group with yearly reporting functions that looks at statewide need, recommends changes to the system, but does not have executive power. O'Connor concluded by saying that it was important to overturn this veto in order to insure that the council survives administrations.

Senator Levesque then spoke, and voiced his concern that if the veto were overridden, the governor might not provide the executive support necessary to make the legislation work. He said that what is needed is a conveyance of a sense of urgency, and we need to make

sure to avoid a confrontation that might not be beneficial.

Lt. Governor Roberts then asked for, and received, a group consensus to send a letter to legislative leadership urging them to overturn the governor's veto. A number of individuals around the table agreed to sign on to the letter.

Lt. Governor Roberts also mentioned that she will be addressing this issue in a speech that she will be giving at URI next month.

Lt. Governor Roberts adjourned the meeting at 9:50am.