

**Testimony of
Jamey Bell and Sharon Langer
In Support of the Reconfirmation of Kevin P. Lembo, State Healthcare Advocate
Before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
March 12, 2009**

Good afternoon Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, Senator McKinney, Representative Piscopo and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. For the record, Jamey Bell is the Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children, whose mission is to promote the well-being of all Connecticut's young people and their families by advocating for strategic public investments and wide public policies. Before last fall Ms. Bell was a legal aid lawyer for 26 years, advocating to improve health care access for Connecticut's residents. Sharon Langer is a Senior Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices, specializing in health care programs and access, and prior to that she was a long-time legal services lawyer concentrating in health law.

Connecticut Voices unequivocally supports the reconfirmation of Kevin Lembo as the state's Healthcare Advocate. The Office of Healthcare Advocate is among the top few of the most effective and important public offices, and this is wholly due to Mr. Lembo's strong leadership, management, strategic thinking, dedication, and hard work. The Office of the Healthcare Advocate, as it has evolved under Kevin Lembo's leadership, is unique. The Office is a premier resource for health and insurance program information across the private and public spectrum, with deep and practical knowledge of laws, rights, procedures, policy and how these interact and play out *on the ground*. It is a consistent and responsible collaborative partner in all efforts to improve health care programs and access across the state, with an eye toward efficiency, comprehensive coverage, systemic improvement and quality. Connecticut Voices relies on Kevin Lembo to lead in ensuring that health care systems affecting our mutual constituencies are as integrated, comprehensive, consumer-friendly, accountable and efficient as possible.

Kevin Lembo also leads an organization that has one of the most effective *advocacy* arms that we have ever seen. It is commonplace for The Office of Healthcare Advocate to receive profuse praise from everyone who seeks assistance from it. We have personally had individuals whom we have referred there thank us for what they characterize as "life-saving" advice and help.

In short, Kevin Lembo and the Office of the HealthCare Advocate get the job done. Mr. Lembo maintains a broad and deep knowledge of the issues, hires the right people, publicizes and follows through on the availability of the service, and *delivers*. We respectfully request that you vote to confirm Kevin Lembo as the Healthcare Advocate and send his nomination to the Senate floor with unanimous support. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.