

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 977
Before the Senate Finance Committee
By Jamal Lee, Executive Director of Breasia Productions
March 4, 2020

My name is Jamal Lee and I own a small business in Laurel Maryland. As a small business owner, offering health coverage to my employees is one of my top priorities. I know how important it is and I know it attracts a high caliber of employee when health coverages are in place. Because our employees know we value them, they will in turn create a better product made in America. Unfortunately, it can be a difficult expense to cover. Small business owners list rising health care costs as one of their biggest challenges.¹ I supported the creation of the Small Business Health Options Program under the Affordable Care Act. The federal tax credits were absolutely necessary to balance the playing field when purchasing health coverage. Every dollar saved is a dollar earned. Small business owners are the back bone of this country and we are being taxed and stretched in every way imaginable. I strongly urge the Committee to build on this program by investing state funding into further subsidizing health coverage for small businesses so that more employers like myself can offer benefits to their employees. I also urge the Committee to invest in outreach and education about the program. Our people perish from the lack of knowledge; too many small businesses in Maryland are unaware of the choices available to them under the Small Business Health Options Program. Unfortunately, the current president is working diligently to methodically dismantle the health care system made accessible for all Americans. It's important that measures be put in place to keep the spirit and the unity behind the Affordable Care Act alive.

As a small business owner building Maryland and contributing to the growth of our country I am hopeful that you will provide a favorable report to Senate Bill 977. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Buttle R., Vlietstra Wonnenberg K., and Simaan A. "Small-Business Owners' Views on Health Coverage and Costs." The Commonwealth Fund. September 9 2019.
<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/sep/small-business-owners-views-health-coverage-costs>