

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HOUSE BILL 709
Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee
By Jamal Lee, Executive Director of Breasia Productions
February 17, 2022

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. Being able to offer health coverage to employees is more important than ever in the economic climate created by the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 creating a state subsidy program for 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 Maryland Health Connection for Small Business Program.

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 House Bill 709. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Knoll, C., Thompson, J. As Congress Debates Social Spending Bill, National Survey Shows Small Business Owners Want Action to Combat Rising Healthcare and Prescription Drug Costs. Small Business for America's Future. November 8, 2021. <https://www.smallbusinessforamericasfuture.org/as-congress-debates-social-spending-bill-national-survey-shows-small-business-owners-want-action-to-combat-rising-healthcare-and-prescription-drug-costs>