

Feb 7th 2022

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair Kelley and Vice Chair Feldman for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 303. My name is Joseph Trier and am here today to urge a favorable report on SB 303, as well as HB1397.

I've been a type one diabetic for almost 19 years – starting at age 8 and still going strong at 26.

At age 14 my dad picked me up from school on a snowy day in early February, and after a few minutes, I could tell something was off. I asked what was wrong and he told me he lost his job. Immediately I started thinking about the worst-case scenario –losing the house, selling all my possessions, and most immediate – running out of money for insulin.

This was not the first time my parents' insurance plans changed while I was a kid, sometimes for better, many times for worse. There were a variety of deductibles, copays, and medication restrictions that made diabetes not only a health condition, but a logistical nightmare. When my dad lost his job, I knew we were paying close to \$300 a month for insulin, almost as much as our grocery bill. Without a stable source of income, this would become impossible to sustain.

As a result, I started rationing my insulin behind my parents back. They were honest with me about the situation but made it clear that I would not have to worry about running out of insulin. Regardless, seeing my mom open the fridge almost daily and double check insulin stock was enough to motivate me to cut back.

I share this story because I have lived a life of incredibly good fortune and privilege. I grew up with a roof over my head, a loving family, and a support system to help me get to where I am today.

The state of Maryland is one filled with pride, and not just in the flag, but in the people it brings together. Many of those people are just like me – they need sleep, food, water, and insulin, to live their lives. While insulin continues to raise in price, so do the number of people that need it to live.

When I apply for a job the first question out of my mouth is “Can you please provide me a copy of the health insurance information.” I cannot accept a job that doesn't provide a certain level of care, and thus (and I've had this happen), lose out on certain opportunities because of insurance coverage. There are plenty of folks in my position who are entitled to socioeconomic mobility, opportunity, and the ability to live life without worrying about basic resources being available to them.

I believe supporting Bill 353 will have an impact on many families and individuals in vulnerable situations, helping them stay the course and lower not only the financial burden, but the emotional toll.

Thank you for for the opportunity to speak today. I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 303/HB1397.

Joe