



**HB 333 - Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement Process**  
**Health and Government Operations**  
**February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**SUPPORT**

Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 333. This bill will create a process of which Marylanders that paid for medical care that should've been free, receive a reimbursement.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

CASH is a member of the End Medical Debt Maryland Coalition, and we support House Bill 333.

Last year, the legislature passed HB 694 in response to a shocking report that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who should have received free medical care in both 2017 and 2018. These numbers were uncovered by the Health Services Cost Review Commission in an analysis produced last year as a requirement of legislation passed by this committee in 2020.

HB 694 required the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) to convene a workgroup of all stakeholders to figure out the best process for refunding patients while also maintaining patient privacy and ensuring safe addresses were used for survivors of intimate partner bias. The workgroup met throughout the fall and there was a consensus among all parties that patients should be refunded.

This year's bill is a technical bill that implements the best process to refund patients. The bill simply also provides support to assist affected consumers through the Office of the Attorney General and requires a report on progress to the General Assembly.

HB 333 ultimately puts hard-earned cash back in the hands of low-income Marylanders who were robbed by the hospitals that were supposed to care for them. This bill gives hospitals the chance to start making things right.

**Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 333.**

*Creating Assets, Savings and Hope*