



TESTIMONY OF AARON BAST, BUSINESS MANAGER AND FINANCIAL
SECRETARY TREASURER OF IRON WORKERS LOCAL 5

BEFORE THE HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
AND THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

IN OPPOSITION TO HB 321 / SB 303

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Chair Beidle, and Honorable Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee:

I am Aaron Bast, Business Manager and Financial Secretary Treasurer of Iron Workers Local 5. On behalf of our members, I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 321 / Senate Bill 303, which seeks to alter the definition of "purchaser" within Maryland's insurance law governing pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs).

HB321 / SB303 introduces changes that exclude certain nonprofit health maintenance organizations (HMOs) from being classified as purchasers. This exclusion threatens the stability of our members' healthcare coverage by reducing the transparency and accountability of PBMs, which are integral to ensuring fair pricing and accessibility of prescription medications.

Iron Workers Local 5 represents hardworking men and women who depend on reliable and affordable healthcare coverage, including prescription drug benefits. The proposed changes in this legislation would create an uneven playing field, allowing nonprofit HMOs to bypass existing regulations that promote transparency, fair pricing, and consumer protection. This could lead to increased healthcare costs, reduced access to necessary medications, and a lack of oversight that directly impacts the health and financial well-being of our members.

Furthermore, the exclusion of nonprofit HMOs from the definition of "purchaser" undermines the intent of Maryland's existing laws, which were enacted to protect consumers from unfair PBM practices. The proposed changes would weaken our ability to negotiate fair contracts and ensure that our members receive the benefits they deserve.

We urge the committee to reject HB321 / SB303 to protect Maryland workers and their families from potential negative impacts on their healthcare coverage. The existing regulatory framework provides essential oversight and ensures a level playing field that benefits all stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective, and we respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB321 / SB303.

Sincerely,

Aaron Bast
Business Manager and Financial Secretary Treasurer
Iron Workers Local 5