



TESTIMONY FOR SB0357

Prescription Drug Affordability Board – Authority for Upper Payment Limits (Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Gile

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0357 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Prescription drug prices are outrageous. There is no real point in making drugs that help people stay healthy if those same people cannot afford them. As many as 45% of Marylanders report struggling to afford the medicines they need, with one third of Marylanders skipping a dose, rationing medication, or leaving a prescription unfilled due to cost. At the same time, skyrocketing drug costs are contributing to all of our health insurance premiums, making quality coverage less affordable for our residents. Meanwhile, prescription drug corporations use far more resources on self-enrichment and advertising than they do on research and development, prioritizing profits over patients. Marylanders should not have to choose between their prescription drugs and other necessities. With federal action on this issue uncertain under the new administration, it is critical that Maryland, under the guidance of this committee, continues to lead the nation on prescription drug affordability efforts.

This bill, if enacted, would grant Maryland's Prescription Drug Affordability Board the expanded authority to set statewide upper payment limits to make high-cost drugs more affordable for all Marylanders. The Board has already made progress, particularly the approval of its Upper Payment Limit Action Plan to make prescription drugs more affordable for state and local governments. However, the fact remains that we must do more to directly help Marylanders struggling to afford their medications. This legislation would provide meaningful relief to our families and neighbors at a time when so many Marylanders are forced to choose between filling their prescriptions and filling their fridges.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.