

# SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1

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(PRE-FILED)

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By: **Senator Kelley**

Requested: October 30, 2020

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2021

Assigned to: Finance

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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

### **Congressional Action – Surprise Billing – Air Ambulance**

FOR the purpose of urging the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that prohibits the balance billing of consumers by certain air ambulances; providing that a copy of this resolution be sent by the Department of Legislative Services to certain individuals; and generally relating to balance billing of consumers by air ambulances.

#### Preamble

WHEREAS, A 2019 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office stated that approximately two-thirds of air ambulance transports were out-of-network in 2017; and

WHEREAS, The same report stated that such out-of-network transports may result in the balance billing of a consumer for charges not covered by the consumer's insurance carrier; and

WHEREAS, Maryland consumers are at risk of being balance billed by out-of-network air ambulances; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the Health Care Cost Institute reported that the average price of an air ambulance trip increased substantially from 2008 to 2017, rising 144% (from \$11,414 in 2008 to \$27,894 in 2017) for helicopters and 166% (from \$15,684 in 2008 to \$41,674 in 2017) for airplanes; and

WHEREAS, The cost of the balance bills can be catastrophic to the finances of individuals and families; and

WHEREAS, The federal 1978 Airline Deregulation Act preempts state-level economic regulation of air carriers, which includes air ambulances; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland is unable to protect Maryland



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consumers from balance billing by air ambulances; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General Assembly of Maryland urges the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that prohibits the balance billing of consumers by air ambulances that do not participate in a consumer's insurance carrier network; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to:

(1) the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the Honorable William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; and the Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and

(2) the Maryland Congressional Delegation.