



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 669 Prescription Drug Affordability Board and Fund

To: Senator Dolores Kelley and members of the Finance Committee

From: Betty McGarvie Crowley, Chair, and Christine Hager, Vice –Chair, Health Task Force, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Date: March 4, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 669, Prescription Drug Affordability Board and Fund.

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD), an advocacy organization with members in Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations throughout the state, joins other advocates to support SB 669. We have signed the Health Care for All Resolution showing the broad support for this legislation. Health care has been a priority since our establishment 15 years ago and is supported at our national level because it supports our unifying principles especially the respect for the inherent worth and dignity of each person.

Many individuals rely on affordable prescription medications for their basic health; yet, often these essential drugs are financially out of reach for many people. We support public policies to end outrageous and unfair costs for prescription medications. SB 669 would create and fund a board to help determine how best to make prescriptions more affordable.

This issue has broad support -- a Kaiser Family Foundation 2017 survey found that 74% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans support allowing an independent group to oversee prescription drug pricing. Being able to acquire a medication to help treat a serious illness is essential for everyone whether the client is a parent with a sick child or an adult with a serious illness. One of the most agonizing situations is not being able to pay for a medication that could help, especially when the same drug can be purchased for much less in other countries that negotiate prices.

Marylanders are very fortunate to have legislators who are responsive and care about the needs of those who are often forgotten. Your passage of SB 759 last year created the country's first Prescription Drug Affordability Board. This groundbreaking legislation will serve as a watchdog and work to lower the cost of prescription in Maryland.

Additional legislation, SB 669, is needed now to accelerate the Board's plans to institute an assessment on pharmaceutical manufacturers and supply chain members beginning in 2020. It will also prevent funding like the \$800,000, designated by you, to be held up by the Governor. Your funding was to fully support the Board.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our faith perspective and to work with you to make a difference in Maryland.

UULM-MD asks you to continue to lead the nation in making prescription drugs affordable for all. Please vote for a favorable report on SB 669

Thank you!

Betty McGarvie Crowley,

Silver Spring, MD

Christine Hager,

Rockville, MD