



Indivisible: Central Maryland

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Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 470 Public Health – Commission on Universal Health Care

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Sheila Ruth

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organizations Submitting: Indivisible Central Maryland, Catonsville Indivisibles, Maryland Legislative Coalition

Persons Submitting: Liz Enagonio, Advocate and Susan Radke, Advocate

Position: Favorable

Indivisible Central Maryland is an unpaid, volunteer grassroots organization of constituents residing in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County and Prince George’s County who are dedicated to protecting progressive and democratic values. **Indivisible Central Maryland strongly supports HB 470** which will establish a Commission to develop a plan for establishing a universal health care program that will provide health benefits to all Marylanders through a single-payer system.

The **Declaration of Independence** states that all are endowed by “their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”. Throughout the decades this once narrow meaning of “all white men” expanded to be inclusive of all humans. Indivisible Central Maryland fervently believes that the right to life is a right that includes healthcare to sustain that life. Therefore, HB 470 provides the groundwork ensuring healthcare as a right; not a privileged benefit for those who can afford it.

HB 470 provides the groundwork to address disparities in our current healthcare system. Health outcomes in the United States vary greatly based on race, gender, income and location. There are statistics and research that demonstrate that Black and Brown communities have less healthcare coverage, fewer healthcare services in their communities, and worse health outcomes. These disparities are evident in our Maryland Black and Brown communities, especially Black and Brown communities located in rural areas of our State.

Importantly, passing HB 470 will benefit Marylanders at all income levels and in all communities, because the Commission can design a universal health care system to lower healthcare costs. We recommend that the bill include a statement that the State of Maryland will negotiate all healthcare costs with providers to ensure that any out-of-pocket costs are low. This will keep cost inflation low, and lower incentives to maximize healthcare profits.

Indivisible Central Maryland, in conjunction with the our partner organizations, urges the House of Delegates to pass HR 470 for the above stated reasons.

Indivisible Central Maryland
Catonsville Indivisibles
Maryland Legislative Coalition