

Testimony SB 493 — Public Health — Commission in Public Healthcare

Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and members of the Finance Committee,

I write as a member of Our Revolution Maryland and a long-time proponent of universal healthcare, but I write also as a long-time patient. As someone who was thrust into rounds of surgery and medication beginning over 40 years ago, I have both witnessed and experienced senseless bureaucracy and negative outcomes of our private insurance markets.

Perhaps there was a time when one could make a serious claim that our private, for-profit healthcare system worked to generate medical advances and better treatment in the United States than elsewhere. We've long passed the time when those arguments had any shred of credibility.

By most measures, healthcare outcomes in this country are worse than almost anywhere else in the developed world, and yet we pay astronomically higher amounts for inferior levels of care. Too many Americans don't seek care at all because of the cost. We are both an outlier and a laggard.

Our spiraling healthcare costs are probably the biggest drag on American competitiveness in the global markets.

We all will know which interests are pushing to continue the system as it is, and they are very influential in policy circles. Still, our policy makers must be guided by informed, objective, analysis. As other states have moved to please consider legislation for universal healthcare in their states, Maryland must do the same.

There are many arguments I could make here in favor of universal healthcare but it seems unnecessary to do. This legislation merely asks for the legislature to set up a commission to study the matter. That commission will carry far more weight with its conclusions than I ever could with my arguments.

I ask that you give a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Fischman
Our Revolution Maryland