

TESTIMONY FOR HB0610 -- Commission on Universal Healthcare

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Ruth

Committee: Health and Governmental Operations

Person Submitting: Amber Green

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0610 as a resident and community leader in Wicomico County located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

As a black mother who gave birth to a black son in Wicomico County, it was not my intention to place him in danger of not receiving equitable healthcare and to possibly lose his life because of how his black parents were being treated in one of the largest hospitals in rural Maryland eastern shore. Hours after my son celebrated his 1-year-old birthday, we rushed him to the hospital for a rising fever and breathing concerns. He was sent home not once, not twice, but three times and we were told to continue to give him breathing treatments. It took his pediatrician to call the hospital and demand he stay overnight for observation. My son ended up being hospitalized for 2 weeks and needed to be urgently transferred to Children's Hospital in Washington, DC where he had to have surgery to treat a severe case of complicated pneumonia.

In Wicomico County, the black infant mortality rate is two times greater than of white infant mortality rate. Black mothers do not have the same opportunity to protect and nurture their children due to the lack of choice based on income. To receive affordable healthcare services such as birth control, annual checkups and to receive those services and not be treated any differently than anyone else, I have to personally drive 40 minutes outside of my city and county of residence. I have to stress that I am a black mother living on the rural eastern shore, an area that is coming to grips with its racial history but still has large disparities when it comes to race and healthcare; we must do better as a people and as a state.

HB0610 is a commonsense bill that will help address these issues and find a way to ensure every person of color on the Eastern Shore has the health insurance they need and the care they deserve.

For that reason, I urge legislators to stand with rural black mothers by supporting this bill and giving it a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.