



Testimony on HB 694

Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Chair Pendergrass and the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

My name is **Hal Ginsberg**, and I live in **Kensington, MD**. I am the **Our Revolution Maryland (ORMD) State Organizer** and ORMD is a member of the End Medical Debt Maryland Coalition. I write both on my own behalf and as a representative of ORMD in strong support of House Bill 694.

HB 694 responds to the shocking report that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who **should have received free medical care** in both 2017 and 2018. The Health Services Cost Review Commission determined these numbers in an analysis produced last year pursuant to legislation passed by this very committee in 2020.

The top managers of Maryland's "non-profit hospitals" are abusing the public's trust that they will operate in a transparent and law-abiding way. Their salaries reflect this. CEOs of large hospital systems are paying themselves millions annually while squeezing poor, struggling, and working Marylanders out of their meager income and any savings they may have been able to secure.

ORMD was founded in reaction to the ever-increasing concentration of our nation's wealth and income among a tiny group of people while nearly everyone else fights to support themselves and their families. Beyond the obvious moral injustice, this has created a cynical angry society with increasing disparities and tensions between and within ethnic and racial groups.

This bill requires hospitals to disgorge revenues to those low-income Marylanders - a disproportionate number of whom are Black and Brown - from whom they were illegally acquired. Simply put, HB 694 begins the process of making things right.

I respectfully urge this committee to demonstrate its commitment to Maryland patients by **issuing a favorable report with NO weakening amendments on HB 694.**

Sincerely,

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