

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 Roselie Bright, and I'm a voting resident of Rockville, MD. I am a member of the End Medical Debt Maryland Coalition, and I support 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. These numbers were uncovered by the Health Services Cost Review Commission in an analysis produced last year as a requirement of legislation passed by this very committee in 2020.

As a neighbor to low income people, I'm shocked that hospitals actually stole money from people who were financially strapped. Furthermore, those patients were undergoing terrible medical stress and should have been supported to heal, not harassed with needless crippling debt.

This bill puts hard-earned cash back in the hands of low-income Marylanders who were robbed by the hospitals that were supposed to care for them. HB 694 gives hospitals the chance to start making things right. **I think the hospitals are lucky this bill doesn't punish violative hospitals for doing the wrong thing.**

I've had the good fortune to have good healthcare insurance. In the absence of universal healthcare, the least Maryland should do is make sure low income people aren't financially harmed by receiving healthcare.

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,

Roselie Bright, ScD
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