

**Commission on Universal Health Care**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Ruth

**Committee:** Health and Government operations

**Organization Submitting:** Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

**Person Submitting:** Jared Schablein, Chair of the LSPC

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0610 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive movement on the Lower Eastern Shore.

Since our organization's creation, the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus and our members have been strong supporters of efforts to move our state and nation towards a Single-Payer Healthcare System that provides quality healthcare to all. Unfortunately, the Eastern Shore of Maryland and communities of color here and across the state have felt the brunt of our broken and immoral healthcare system.

Under our current healthcare system, there are discrepancies in care between white and minority patients. In addition, rural areas like the Shore have a dangerous lack of access to vital health services resulting in most of us traveling over two hours or to a different state for the care we need. Finally, there are still so many within our community and around the state who are still uninsured or underinsured. These issues have shown that one thing is clear. We need to create a Kirwan-like committee to study how these issues can be addressed and universal healthcare coverage could be achieved. As someone with family members who still don't have health insurance, this legislation is very personal because I know the good that it will do for our state.

In addition, HB0610 would allow our state to lead the nation by joining the rest of the industrialized world by transitioning our current system to a Single Payer system most efficiently and cost-effectively to ensure all Marylanders have quality healthcare.

HB0610 would accomplish the first step by creating and funding a commission to collect the information needed to develop a plan so that Maryland can join the rest of the industrialized world by implementing a Single-Payer Healthcare System and ensuring that it provides quality healthcare to all Marylanders.

HB0610 also allows us to become the nation's leader when it comes to healthcare by showing us the way to innovate and lead in the same way that Maryland did with the hospital system. This commission will show the people of Maryland that their legislators are committed to lowering the costs for healthcare, providing more coverage for things like mental health and dental, and ensuring that all Marylanders have health insurance.

The Lower Shore Progressive Caucus supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.