

# The Baltimore Teachers Union

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## **Testimony on HB694** Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

Position: **FAVORABLE**

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

My name is Diamonté Brown, and on behalf of our over 7,000 members in Baltimore City and Maryland, the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU) supports House Bill 694.

HB694 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.

It is **outrageous** that Maryland hospitals are padding their already thick pockets by plunging low income Marylanders into debt. They are violating their ethical and legal commitments to our community and the consequences are far reaching. We see first hand the trickle-down effect of students who show up to the classroom when their families are struggling financially to make ends meet. Those students are less available for academic learning because their survival needs are taking precedence.

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. HB694 gives hospitals the chance to start 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 HB694.**

Sincerely,

Diamonté Brown, President  
Baltimore Teachers Union