



# END MEDICAL DEBT MARYLAND

## **Testimony on SB404**

Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

Position: FAVORABLE

To Chair Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee;

My name is Michael Lent, and I'm a resident of Parkville in District 08. I am a member of the End Medical Debt Maryland coalition, and I support SB404 which will implement a process to reimburse hospital patients who were supposed to receive free healthcare but were wrongfully billed by a hospital.

### Background

Last year, the legislature passed HB694 in response to a 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 committee in 2020.

HB694 required the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) to convene a workgroup of all stakeholders to figure out the best process for refunding patients while also maintaining patient privacy and ensuring safe-addresses were used for survivors of intimate partner bias. The workgroup met throughout the fall and there was a consensus among all parties that patients should be refunded.

### SB404

This year's bill is a technical bill that implements the best process to refund patients. The bill simply also provides support to assist affected consumers through the Office of the Attorney General and requires a report on progress to the General Assembly.

SB404 ultimately 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.

This bill 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 on SB404. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Lent  
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