



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 281

Commission on Public Health – Establishment

Before the Senate Finance Committee

By Shruti Police, Intern, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc.

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Chair Griffith, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 281. We also thank Senators Lam and Rosapepe for being the lead sponsors for this bill. I am submitting this testimony today as an intern on behalf of our individual organization, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, Inc., as we have not reviewed this legislation with the full Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition. Our mission is to ensure that all Marylanders have access to quality affordable health care coverage, and one of our top priorities is health equity.

This bill would create a Commission of Public Health to assess the capability of Maryland's health departments to provide foundational public health services, including responses to COVID-19, overdose deaths, and racial and ethnic inequities in maternal mortality and birth outcomes. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of raising up consumer voices in the Commission's process as it works to make recommendations to improve the delivery of foundational public health services. We thank the Committee for all of its leadership which has resulted in over 400,000 Marylanders getting health coverage since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and in the creation of programs to improve health equity like those enabled by the Health Equity Resource Act. Senate Bill 281 will continue Maryland's progress. We urge the Committee to give a favorable report for Senate Bill 281.