

Date of Hearing - February 21, 2024

Robert Cullen
Baltimore, MD 21214

TESTIMONY ON SB0705 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Access to Care Act

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Robert Cullen

My name is Robert Cullen. I am a resident of District 45 and a parishioner of the racially diverse Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Baltimore. In addition, I have been an active member of the Latino Racial Justice Circle in the Baltimore region for four years now. I am submitting to all of you today this testimony in support of SB0705 - Access to Care Act.

As a lifelong Marylander and a longtime resident of Baltimore – and also someone staunchly dedicated to the pursuit of social justice priorities here in our state – I strongly support the Access to Care Act (SB0705). This bill is a critically needed measure that, if passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the governor, would open up the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to all Marylanders regardless of their immigration status.

Everyone living here in the Free State should have access to the highest attainable standard of medical services. I want to underscore that no one should fall sick or even die as a result of their income or immigration status. At this time, however, over 275,000 undocumented immigrants in our state are ineligible for insurance available via the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.

Maryland can do better, must do better, to ensure that the rights of immigrants among us are not trampled on and that these individuals are likewise given the access to equitable health care treatment that many of us already enjoy and that we all deserve. As far as this social justice priority is concerned, SB0705 is indeed a vital, needed step towards pushing aside existing medical care inequities and stemming the tide of infectious diseases throughout our home state.

With this in mind, I ask all of you to please search your hearts, embrace the public good, and give this crucial bill your fullest and fairest consideration. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0705. Thank you.