



Testimony to the House Health & Government Operations Committee  
HB673 Real Property-Contract Liens-Medical Debt  
**Position: Favorable**

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Health & Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, HOB  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
cc: Members, Health & Government Operations Committee

Honorable Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

End Medical Debt Maryland is a coalition of consumer protection, labor, faith-based, civil rights, health, and patient advocates that have united together to end medical debt in Maryland. Our coalition is composed of more than 60 organizations as well as individuals who have been impacted by medical debt-together we represent more than 400,000 Marylanders working to end the devastating impact of medical debt on families across the state.

We are here in strong support of HB673.

HB673 builds on the strong work of this committee and the General Assembly over the past few years. As this committee knows, families across Maryland, especially low-income families in communities of color have been sued for hospital medical debt by Maryland's nonprofit hospitals. The average amount of debt pursued was \$945. Many of the patients that were sued worked at Wal-Mart, Amazon, or as service workers in the hospitals that sued them. Many had their wages garnished but more than 4,000 households had liens placed on their homes.

More than 40% of Maryland patients recently polled had unaffordable debt from outpatient services including dental, dermatologists, ob/gyn and diagnostic services. These medical practices also sue patients for small amounts and place liens on homes.

HB673 builds on the past work of this committee to prohibit liens on primary residences for medical debt. It eliminates an aggressive collection tactic and protects patients homes and finances.

For all these reasons, we support HB673 and urge a favorable report.

