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Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Authority for Upper Payment Limits (**Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act**)

TESTIMONY ON SB#357- POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

FROM: Abigail Conrad

OPENING: My name is Abigail Conrad. I am a resident of District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#357, (Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act)

I am an active member of the Maryland Poor People's Campaign (MD PPC).

Overall, this bill will decrease drug costs on prescriptions that Marylanders desperately need- especially families with children, working adults, older citizens, and people with disabilities.

As a member of the MD PPC that bases its actions on poverty data. Maryland has one of the highest median household incomes in the country, yet 21% of Marylanders are poor and low-income. That means that they cannot afford high cost drugs.

My moral tradition emphasizes the importance of affordable health care to support the common good. High drug costs affect everyone and can unexpectedly hit anyone. I am someone with chronic illness and infertility. In the past two years, I have had to take multiple medications that are thousands of dollars per injection. I have had to pay hundreds of dollars in unexpected costs (e.g., \$800) at the pharmacy to take extremely time critical medications for fertility treatments. You are left without a choice but to pay. I shouldn't have to spend thousands to build a family. I also have to take Xolair monthly, which is the only thing in over a decade that has worked to control my systematic allergy issues. The list price of Xolair is over \$30,000 per year. If you don't have insurance or have poor coverage, there is no way someone can pay for that. Finally, we know that disparities in wealth make high drug costs a life and death question. My experience standing beside low-wealth and working Maryland residents, I learned how large the wealth gap is between Black and white people and know how disproportionately they are impacted by high drug costs. All Marylanders should have access to affordable medication.

To sum up, I support the **SB#357 Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act** because no one's access to medication should be limited by cost.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#357

Abigail Conrad