



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Health and Government Operations Committee
on
Senate Bill 981
March 19, 2025
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak about health care in Maryland. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a faith community with congregations in every region of our State.

Our community has advocated for access to appropriate, adequate, and affordable health care for all people in the United States and its territories since 2003.

Affordable health care remains an elusive policy goal, despite all that Maryland and a clutch of its state colleagues have done to advance access. Medical debt is common enough in the public context that it is still a leading cause of bankruptcy. Our view is that this creates one more barrier to access, which is our community's interest.

Senate Bill 981 expands available financial assistance for medical debt and thankfully limits the practice of lawsuits by medical institutions for arrearage and recovery of debt. Being ill should not be a cause for harassment, threat, and a potential cascade to homelessness or permit precarity.

We regard this bill as necessary for humane justice and urge your favorable report.

Lee Hudson