



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SPONSOR TESTIMONY**

**HB 1059 - Health - Maryland Helping Everyone Afford Life-Saving Treatments and Health Care (HEALTH) Fund and Income Tax Checkoff**

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Lowe House of Delegates Building, 6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and Esteemed Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

There is widespread uncertainty about nearly every aspect of the United States' government, and its health care programs are no exception. Between the proposed cuts and reductions in federal cost sharing for Medicaid and the specific policies targeting marginalized communities, our state's most vulnerable populations are scared and wondering if their life-saving health care will be taken away from them in the coming weeks and months.

Informed by my work as a member of the Ways and Means committee and with thanks for the partnership of the Health and Government Operations Committee, we are contemplating this problem from a financial management perspective: in a state budget crisis year, how can we create durable financial structures that will enable our state to continue meeting the commitments it has made to all Marylanders' health care?

HB 1059 establishes the Helping Everyone Afford Life-saving Treatments and Healthcare Fund -- the HEALTH Fund, which is my attempt to answer that question. The bill creates pathways for charitably-inclined Marylanders to directly donate to help fellow Marylanders whose health care coverage is impacted by damaging federal actions. Considering that twenty two percent of American adults have donated to GoFundMe medical fundraising campaigns, and that nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars are raised annually on just that one platform for medical expenses, there is a demonstrated desire among every-day people to help their neighbors afford the care they need. HB 1059 aims to harness that desire to respond to the medical funding challenge our federal government is needlessly creating.

I am under no illusions that this year's bill will offset anticipated losses from federal funding actions, which tally in the billions of dollars. Indeed, the bill does not raise a cent in taxes on anybody. Its necessity is that it proactively creates a vehicle to receive and disburse any revenue streams dedicated towards augmenting health care funding. In addition to encouraging charitable donations and cultivate mutual care for impacted Marylanders, establishing the HEALTH Fund now will allow it to be set up and ready to help people if and when funding cuts hit.

There are safeguards in the bill to ensure that the intentions of donors are honored: express direction as to how the funds will be used, prohibitions on use of funds for the Health Benefit Exchange's administrative costs, and a clear direction that the money raised for this fund is supplemental.

During these uncertain times for our federal government, state government must step up to protect its own citizens. HB 1059 is one of those necessary and proactive steps, creating a health care funding vehicle and granting those Marylanders who are able to give a pathway to donate towards making sure that Everyone can Afford Life-Saving Treatments and Healthcare.

To create a more engaged and supportive community, I urge the committee to give HB 1059 a favorable report.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kris Fair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kris" and last name "Fair" clearly distinguishable.

Delegate Kris Fair  
District 3, Frederick County