



Testimony for House Bill 484
Before the Ways and Means Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendment

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee;

My name is Ricarra Jones and I am the Political Director for 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, Maryland/DC. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, representing 10,000 members in our region. Our union supports HB 484 and urges the Committee to issue a **favorable** report.

House Bill 484 protects consumers from the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs while also generating revenue to help support the growing health care coverage demands of our state.

1199 SEIU strongly believes that Maryland should be doing everything that it can to help people keep their health coverage. When people delay care due to lack of health care coverage, In the coming years, hundreds of thousands of Marylanders are expected to lose their coverage due to new administrative burdens and budget cuts from HR 1 and Congress's termination of enhanced advance premium tax credits. Delegate Ziegler's proposed amendment would use the revenue to combat federal attacks on Marylanders' access to health coverage, and help keep people covered.

Under HR 1 there will be new work requirements and six month redeterminations for adults who receive Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act expansion. The vast majority of these adults would qualify for an exemption or already work, yet they are still at risk of losing their Medicaid coverage due to increased red tape. Delegate Ziegler's amendment would put \$5 million per year into funding Medicaid eligibility operations, which would help the State build and maintain the infrastructure to keep Marylanders from falling through the cracks and losing their Medicaid coverage. The Department of Legislative Services estimated that it would cost the state \$20 million to administer these new requirements in FY 2026, \$50 million in FY 2027, and \$10 million in subsequent fiscal years.

For too long, the pharmaceutical industry has claimed they need to keep their prices high for research and development while they have spent many times more on advertising and self-enriching activities. It is time that Maryland puts an end to taxpayer sponsorship of this practice and puts our patients first. We urge a favorable report on House Bill 484 with Delegate Ziegler's amendment.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones | ricarra.jones@1199.org

Political Director | 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East