

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1

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SJ 5/20 – FIN

(PRE-FILED)

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By: **Senator Kelley**

Requested: October 30, 2020

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2021

Assigned to: Finance

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Congressional Action – Surprise Billing – Air Ambulance**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that prohibits the balance
4 billing of consumers by certain air ambulances; providing that a copy of this
5 resolution be sent by the Department of Legislative Services to certain individuals;
6 and generally relating to balance billing of consumers by air ambulances.

7 Preamble

8 WHEREAS, A 2019 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office stated that
9 approximately two-thirds of air ambulance transports were out-of-network in 2017; and

10 WHEREAS, The same report stated that such out-of-network transports may result
11 in the balance billing of a consumer for charges not covered by the consumer's insurance
12 carrier; and

13 WHEREAS, Maryland consumers are at risk of being balance billed by
14 out-of-network air ambulances; and

15 WHEREAS, In 2019, the Health Care Cost Institute reported that the average price
16 of an air ambulance trip increased substantially from 2008 to 2017, rising 144% (from
17 \$11,414 in 2008 to \$27,894 in 2017) for helicopters and 166% (from \$15,684 in 2008 to
18 \$41,674 in 2017) for airplanes; and

19 WHEREAS, The cost of the balance bills can be catastrophic to the finances of
20 individuals and families; and

21 WHEREAS, The federal 1978 Airline Deregulation Act preempts state-level
22 economic regulation of air carriers, which includes air ambulances; and

23 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland is unable to protect Maryland



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1 consumers from balance billing by air ambulances; now, therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General
3 Assembly of Maryland urges the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that prohibits the
4 balance billing of consumers by air ambulances that do not participate in a consumer's
5 insurance carrier network; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
7 Legislative Services to:

8 (1) the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the
9 Honorable William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; and the
10 Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and

11 (2) the Maryland Congressional Delegation.