



February 22, 2021

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce representing more than 700 businesses and organizations, we request support of Senate Bill 621. All Chambers of Commerce encourage oversight by the Maryland Insurance Administration affording a higher level of accountability. This will insure that quality plans are offered that meet the requirements of the ACA and the State, and we plan to work with in-state insurance carriers.

Allowing Chambers of Commerce to create eligible Association Health Plans as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor, small business owners and their employees will have access to better plans at lower rates. In 2018 the Department of Labor's final rule was established which opened up the door for Chambers of Commerce across the United States to offer AHP plans and thousands of businesses can NOW offer health plans to their employees and those already providing some health plan coverage have saved 20 to 45 percent on their premiums. All of our Chamber members have expressed their need to participate in an AHP if they were made available. These are group health plans that employer groups and associations offer to provide coverage for their members employees. They allow small employers to pool their employees to gain regulatory and economic advantages currently available to large employers. THESE ARE NOT SELF INSURED PLANS. These plans are administered by an insurance carrier such as Blue Cross / Blue Shield, United Healthcare or Aetna.

Under Maryland's current law, small businesses are not permitted to pool their employees. SB621 changes the law for pooled employees in an AHP to be rated as a LARGE GROUP. This Bill also allows for Chambers of Commerce and labor unions to offer AHP's to their members.

Please support Maryland's small businesses and their employees by giving a FAVORABLE report to Senate Bill 621 with amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. R. Chambers".

William R. Chambers
President/CEO
Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce

SALISBURY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Voice for Business on Delmarva