



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**House Bill 694 – Medical Bill Reimbursement**  
**Senate Finance Committee Wednesday March 30, 2022**  
**SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2022 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB694. This bill will rectify nonprofit hospitals' systemic overbilling of patients who should have received free healthcare by paying patients back; and hold hospitals accountable to their legal obligation to provide free healthcare to low-income Marylanders. A recent study by the Health Services Cost Review Commission found that in the years 2017-2018 Maryland's hospitals charged patients who should have received free healthcare 60% of the time; totaling an estimated \$60 million per year that was wrongly taken from patients.

Women and children who live below 200% of the poverty level are especially negatively impacted when they are forced to pay a hospital bill that they cannot afford to pay. The HSCRC report dated February 2021 determined that approximately 60% of uncompensated care charges are attributable to individuals with a household income under 200% of the federal poverty level. HB694 will establish a process requiring state agencies and the Comptroller to identify patients who were wrongly charged and refund those patients the amount that they overpaid. The legislation protects patients' privacy in accord with HIPAA and establishes a process to safely reach out to patients who use an alternate address. HB694 covers patients who were wrongly charged between 2017-2021 and requires progress reports to this committee and the House Health & Government Operations Committee.

*This bill does not require hospitals to pay damages. It simply requires them to return funds paid by low-income patients who should never have been billed in the first place. This is a reasonable requirement.*

**We ask for your support for HB0694 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.**

Respectfully,

Leslie Milano  
President