

Testimony on HB 694

Hospitals - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Chair Pendergrass and the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

My name is Susan Allen and I'm a resident of Annapolis, Maryland. I write this as a private citizen on behalf of the End Medical Debt Maryland Coalition, and I support House Bill 694.

Maryland hospitals have not behaved morally in charging patients who should have received free medical care and then they engaged in aggressive debt collection to make them pay.

These 2017-2018 **overcharged patients are owed a total of \$120** million by these hospitals. HB694 will force these hospitals to reimburse them.

Maryland hospitals have betrayed a public trust. Obviously, my husband and I do not trust their administrations because we pay over \$12,000 a year in medical insurance to make sure a catastrophic hospital illness will not force us into bankruptcy.

Unfortunately, my low-wealth neighbors cannot afford this high insurance cost and are relying on the legal obligation of hospitals to give free treatment. ***These hospitals are violating their commitment and stealing from members of our communities*** who don't have funds to spare.

This bill puts hard-earned cash back in the hands of low-income Marylanders who were robbed by the hospitals that were supposed to care for them. HB 694 gives hospitals the chance to start making things right.

I respectfully urge this committee to demonstrate its commitment to Maryland patients by **issuing a favorable report with NO weakening amendments on HB 694.**

Sincerely,
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