



END MEDICAL DEBT MARYLAND

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 Michael Walsh, and I'm a resident of Anne Arundel County. I am a member of the End Medical Debt Maryland Coalition, and I support House Bill 694.

HB 694 responds to the shocking report that Maryland hospitals collected an estimated \$60 million from patients who *should have received free medical care* in both 2017 and 2018. These numbers were uncovered by the Health Services Cost Review Commission in an analysis produced last year as a requirement of legislation passed by this very committee in 2020.

As a two-time cancer survivor I know all too well the burden of seeing the price to save my life. So you can imagine how heartbroken I was to learn that there are others in Maryland that are seeing bills not unlike my own but never should have because they legally qualify for free medical care. I can't understand why hospitals would be stealing from my fellow Marylanders! You cannot say that hospitals are acting in the best interest of their patients if they turn around and bill someone that shouldn't be, it's just not right.

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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