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SPEAKER PRO TEM

Economic Matters Committee

Rules and Executive  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony Supporting House Bill 376**  
**Verbal Testimony for the Health & Government Operations Committee**  
**February 16, 2023**  
**Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes**

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chairwoman Kelly, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 376, a bill to eliminate out of pocket costs for Diagnostic and Supplemental Examinations for Breast Cancer. For the record, my name is Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes, and I am speaking with you as the sponsor of House Bill 376.

I'll start with a fun fact: this bill was introduced in 2018 by then Delegate, and now Lieutenant Governor, Aruna Miller. We are thrilled to be able to re-introduce this bill.

I personally wanted to sponsor this bill because lives are forever changed from the day you walk in the examination room to have a mammogram to the awaiting period of receiving a letter or swift phone call from the provider notifying you of the results. Upon learning the results, you proceed accordingly whether to return for more testing or not, and unfortunately that decision is often a financial one. This legislation helps afford women the opportunity to make these decisions about their health without being limited by their finances. Additionally, this legislation is important because it is designed to help many and is a step towards being inclusive of all.

Diagnostic breast imaging is used as a follow-up test after finding an abnormality on a screening mammogram. Diagnostic imaging examinations include diagnostic mammography, breast ultrasound, and breast MRI's. A Susan G. Komen-commissioned study found that the average out-of-pocket costs for diagnostic imaging examinations ranged from \$234 to \$1,021. Patient advocates have voiced their concerns about the costs of these tests, as some patients are unable to afford them, resulting in delay of care.

In 2023, approximately 5,760 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 850 will die from the disease in Maryland. These diagnostic imaging examinations are critical to allow for early detection and to catch the disease before it spreads. As legislators, we can eliminate this barrier to healthcare in Maryland.

To provide you with some data, 12-16% of women screened with a mammogram require a follow up diagnostic imaging examination. Outside of that 12-16%, diagnostic imaging examinations are

also used for breast cancer patients in recovery who receive tests every 6-months to a year during remission, to hopefully confirm that they remain cancer-free.

This legislation also covers the out-of-pocket costs for supplemental examinations, which includes diagnostic testing for those who have a personal or family medical history that classifies them as having an increased risk of breast cancer.

Another aspect of this bill that's critical to discuss is its posture in creating fair and equal coverage for all individuals. Evidence shows that commercially insured African American breast cancer patients were diagnosed at a later stage and had a higher mortality rate, when compared with their white counterparts with the same insurance status.

As we continue to fight for the cure for breast cancer, our goal with this bill is to create equitable access to breast imaging. All Marylanders deserve that, and I think it's the least we can do to try and combat this disease. Thank you for your time and I request a favorable report for House Bill 376.