

LOGOS

Dear [Chair X] and members of the committee:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing Virginians across the Commonwealth, we write to express our strong support for Delegate Delaney's House Bill (HB) 1725. HB 1725 is a critical piece of legislation aimed at shielding patients from the crushing burden of medical debt. We thank the Delegate for her leadership on this important issue that affects patients and families across the Commonwealth.

Medical debt is a significant burden for thousands of Virginians, often forcing individuals and families to make difficult financial decisions, forego necessary care, or face long-term financial instability. Recent survey data found that more than half (55%) of Virginians have experienced a healthcare affordability burden in the past year and that more than three-quarters (78%) worried about affording healthcare in the future¹. Medical debt is often cited as one of the primary reasons for families who file bankruptcy and patients facing medical debt are more likely to delay or avoid seeking necessary care².

This legislation offers reasonable steps toward addressing the systemic challenges of medical debt by:

1. Protecting patients from extraordinary medical debt collection methods, including wage garnishment and foreclosure on primary homes.
2. Eliminating interest and late fees on medical bills.
3. Ensuring patients have access to affordable payment plans with payments capped at 5% of a patient's monthly income.

According to a 2023 poll of Americans across the political spectrum, legislative action on medical debt reform is popular and bipartisan. **91% of survey respondents agreed that “elected officials should pass policies that protect people with serious illness from medical debt.”**³ States across the nation, from the Northeast to the Southwest, have

¹ <https://www.healthcarevaluehub.org/advocate-resources/publications/virginians-struggle-afford-high-healthcare-costs-support-range-government-solutions-across-party-lines#:~:text=A%20survey%20of%20more%20than,healthcare%20in%20the%20future%3B%20and>

² <https://apnews.com/article/medical-debt-legislation-2a4f2fab7e2c58a68ac4541b8309c7aa>

³ <https://www.ils.org/news/nearly-1-2-patients-medical-debt-feel-trapped-new-poll-leading-healthcare-orgs-finds>

enacted meaningful reforms to protect patients and families from medical debt. HB 1725 builds on the bipartisan success to ban credit reporting for medical bills during the 2024 General Assembly session.

This initiative aligns with our shared commitment to ensuring that no Virginian faces financial ruin due to illness or injury. By reducing the negative consequences of medical debt, this legislation promotes healthier families, more stable communities, and a stronger Commonwealth.

We respectfully urge the Virginia General Assembly to pass this legislation. Thank you for your attention to this important issue. For additional information, please contact Lauren Edwards at lauren.edwards@lls.org or (804) 922-3446.

Sincerely,

[Coalition Members]