
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8006

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senators Hasegawa, Cleveland, Billig, Kuderer, Lovelett, Nguyen, Shewmake, Stanford, Valdez, and C. Wilson

Read first time 02/09/23. Referred to Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

1 TO THE HONORABLE JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
2 STATES, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE
3 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF
4 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND THE
5 SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
6 SERVICES:

7 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
8 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled,
9 respectfully represent and petition as follows:

10 WHEREAS, Universal health care is one of the most important
11 issues in the United States; and

12 WHEREAS, Our current health care system is in a downward spiral
13 with costs continuing to skyrocket, medical debt driving many into
14 bankruptcy or life-altering indebtedness, increasing child mortality
15 rates especially in communities with lower incomes, and creating
16 unnecessary suffering in entire families who struggle to maintain
17 health care insurance coverage or recover from the impacts of health
18 care costs up to and including bankruptcy and homelessness; and

19 WHEREAS, A national universal health care program is the most
20 efficient and cost-effective means of providing access to health care
21 for everyone and eliminating the economic, physical and mental health
22 pain and suffering so many Americans are experiencing due to lack of
23 timely access to health care and/or debt incurred; and

1 WHEREAS, A single-payer health plan in the state of Washington
2 would replace the state's current multipayer system in which
3 individuals, private businesses, and government entities pay public
4 and private insurers for health care coverage; and

5 WHEREAS, This health plan would establish a state agency to
6 finance all medically necessary health care with substantial savings
7 compared with the existing multipayer system of public and private
8 insurers; and

9 WHEREAS, This health plan would reduce financial barriers to
10 access care and the growing number of residents with inadequate
11 coverage. By reducing administrative and other waste, including
12 health insurance company profits and excessive prices for drugs,
13 hospitals, and medical devices, it would save money on health care;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Washington businesses and workers will benefit by
16 lowering the cost of health care, removing the burden of unfunded and
17 inadequate coverage, and allowing businesses to compete more
18 effectively on national and international markets. Businesses will
19 also benefit directly by removing the cost of selecting and
20 implementing health insurance programs for their workers, a billion-
21 dollar expenditure for businesses in the state; and

22 WHEREAS, The current system of fragmented private health
23 insurance is the main obstacle to expanding access to health care
24 because it promotes administrative waste, both in the processing of
25 bills by providers and in the administration of a health insurance
26 system with its many separate health insurance companies, each
27 offering a large variety of separate plans, each plan involving
28 separate pricing schemes; and

29 WHEREAS, The large number of independent companies and health
30 plans forces each provider to operate an entire back office with
31 billing clerks and other personnel to deal with billing and
32 negotiating prices for services and vastly inflating the cost for
33 providing health care; and

34 WHEREAS, The failures of the current private health insurance
35 system allow many opportunities to do better. Our health care
36 problems are not inevitable, not the result of technology or
37 "consumers" insatiable greed. They are the result of bad
38 institutions: Private health insurance and for-profit medicine whose
39 financial incentives favor sickness and treatment over prevention and
40 recovery. We have made mistakes in designing our health care system

1 and we are paying for those mistakes. But that means that we can
2 design a better system; and

3 WHEREAS, Replacing an inefficient, inequitable, and destructive
4 health care finance system with a fair system will promote economic
5 efficiency, better health, and good public policy; and

6 WHEREAS, Because the failures of our health care system most
7 dramatically harm marginalized communities, creating a system of
8 universal access, free point-of-service care and standardized
9 reimbursements will not only make health care less expensive, it will
10 also make it fairer and more equitable. Instead of being a system
11 that destroys future opportunity for many, it will be a system which
12 empowers communities through their newfound health and independence;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
14 federal government create a universal health care program to ensure
15 that every resident of our country has timely access to health care
16 services without incurring crippling familial debt, and absent
17 federal government action on this matter that the federal government
18 partner with the state of Washington to reduce barriers and allow the
19 state to successfully implement a single-payer health system for the
20 people of Washington such as passing HR 3775 (by Rep. Ro Khanna,
21 CA-17) in Congress allowing states to create universal health care
22 programs, or granting Washington state the appropriate waivers.

23 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
24 transmitted to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the
25 United States, the Secretary of the United States Department of
26 Health and Human Services, the President of the United States Senate,
27 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of
28 Congress from the State of Washington.

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