
ENGROSSED 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, Article 25 of the universal declaration of human rights
13 ratified by the United Nations declares health care is a human right;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Of all the
16 forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and
17 inhuman"; and

18 WHEREAS, Our current health care system is in a downward spiral
19 with costs continuing to skyrocket, medical debt driving many into
20 bankruptcy or life-altering indebtedness, increasing child mortality
21 rates especially in communities with lower incomes, and creating
22 unnecessary suffering in entire families who struggle to maintain

1 health care insurance coverage or recover from the impacts of health
2 care costs up to and including bankruptcy and homelessness; and

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

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

12 WHEREAS, This health plan would establish a state agency to
13 finance all medically necessary health care with substantial savings
14 compared with the existing multipayer system of public and private
15 insurers; and

16 WHEREAS, This health plan would reduce financial barriers to
17 access care and the growing number of residents with inadequate
18 coverage. By reducing administrative and other waste, including
19 health insurance company profits and excessive prices for drugs,
20 hospitals, and medical devices, it would save money on health care;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Washington businesses and workers will benefit by
23 lowering the cost of health care, removing the burden of unfunded and
24 inadequate coverage, and allowing businesses to compete more
25 effectively on national and international markets. Businesses will
26 also benefit directly by removing the cost of selecting and
27 implementing health insurance programs for their workers, a billion-
28 dollar expenditure for businesses in the state; and

29 WHEREAS, The current system of fragmented private health
30 insurance is the main obstacle to expanding access to health care
31 because it promotes administrative waste, both in the processing of
32 bills by providers and in the administration of a health insurance
33 system with its many separate health insurance companies, each
34 offering a large variety of separate plans, each plan involving
35 separate pricing schemes; and

36 WHEREAS, The large number of independent companies and health
37 plans forces each provider to operate an entire back office with
38 billing clerks and other personnel to deal with billing and
39 negotiating prices for services and vastly inflating the cost for
40 providing health care; and

1 WHEREAS, The failures of the current private health insurance
2 system allow many opportunities to do better. Our health care
3 problems are not inevitable, not the result of technology or
4 "consumers" insatiable greed. They are the result of bad
5 institutions: Private health insurance and for-profit medicine whose
6 financial incentives favor sickness and treatment over prevention and
7 recovery. We have made mistakes in designing our health care system
8 and we are paying for those mistakes. But that means that we can
9 design a better system; and

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

13 WHEREAS, Because the failures of our health care system most
14 dramatically harm marginalized communities, creating a system of
15 universal access, free point-of-service care and standardized
16 reimbursements will not only make health care less expensive, it will
17 also make it fairer and more equitable. Instead of being a system
18 that destroys future opportunity for many, it will be a system which
19 empowers communities through their newfound health and independence;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
21 federal government:

22 (1) Create a universal health care program to ensure that every
23 resident of Washington state and our country has timely access to
24 health care services without incurring crippling familial debt;

25 (2) Absent federal government action on the request in subsection
26 (1) of this memorial, partner with the state of Washington to reduce
27 barriers and allow the state to successfully implement a single-payer
28 health system for the people of Washington such as passing HR 6270
29 (by Rep. Ro Khanna, CA-17) in Congress which will allow states to
30 create their own universal health care programs; or

31 (3) Absent federal government action on the requests in
32 subsections (1) and (2) of this memorial with the appropriate federal
33 agencies, work to grant Washington state the appropriate waivers to
34 remove the restrictions on the state's ability to create a universal
35 health care system.

36 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
37 transmitted to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the
38 United States, the Secretary of the United States Department of
39 Health and Human Services, the Secretary of the United States

1 Department of Labor, the federal agencies involved with granting the
2 requested necessary waivers, the President of the United States
3 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, each member of
4 Congress from the State of Washington.

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