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Senate Health Care Committee Testimony on SB 631 Health Care for All Oregon

Chair Senator Lorrie Monnes Anderson  
Vice Chair Senator Jeff Cruz  
Senator Tim Knopp  
Senator Chip Shields  
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Haywood

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on SB 631 the Health Care for all Initiative. Many may be surprised to learn that health care reform has not fixed what is broken in our health care system. Today there are still thousands of hard working Oregonians who still are unable to get the health care they need at a cost they can afford from a provider of their choice.

As you know the disastrous roll-out of health care reform in Oregon continues to have a negative impact on Oregonians seeking to follow the law and purchase healthcare. Unfortunately what we now have is a system that is set up to collect payment from individuals but less likely to provide the health care people need when they need it,

My experience is not unique. My husband and I who run a small business signed up last year. Due to the lack of a system in Oregon we were forced onto the open market. The provider gave us access to a web page of providers who they then told us to pick from. The data base listed over 750,000 providers yet provided no way to make an informed choice about which of these providers would be best for my family.

I don't think our experience was unique and we were pretty knowledgeable as we sought to obtain coverage. My experience has been that even with coverage it is too expensive to get the health care I need. Once a year I can get a checkup but any other time the co-pays required, even after paying over \$6,000 annually is cost prohibitive. I don't think that was what we sought when we worked to reform our health care system, yet this is the results of not fundamentally changing the system just forcing people to pay into an ineffective system.

Unlike what we have been led to believe, the current system is not improving the health of individuals but the bottom line for health care providers. A system based on health would not leave so many hard working people out of receiving health care.

As the President of the NAACP Portland Chapter I receive calls constantly from community members who are seeking health care because they either can't afford the current premium's or they have no clue how to access the current system. We can do better. A single payer system in Oregon will make us a leader in health care reform across the nation and could be a model for other states who understand the current system isn't working for so many of us. Having health care attached to the patient and not the employer will make workers the facilitator of their health, not their employers.

Again, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on this important matter.  
Sincerely,

