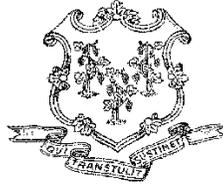


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March 24, 2021

Good morning Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee. I would like to express my support for 683 AN ACT CONCERNING HOSPITAL BILLING AND COLLECTION EFFORTS BY HOSPITALS AND COLLECTION AGENCIES. This legislation would (1) restrict (A) the amount that a hospital or collection agent may recover from an uninsured or underinsured patient for the unpaid cost of health care, and (B) the manner in which a hospital or collection agent may secure or recover payment for the unpaid cost of health care, and (2) modify provisions concerning hospital billing practices to protect patients who receive health care at outpatient clinics that are owned by, or affiliated with, hospitals.

In 2003, I along with now US Senator Chris Murphy and former State Senate Appropriations Committee chair Toni Harp were able to secure passage of PA 03-266, An Act Concerning Hospital Billing Practices. This act addressed abusive collection practices that were in use by some hospitals in our state. The protections included limiting the interest on this debt to 5%, increasing the income level for uninsured persons who can be billed only costs (rather than charges), increasing the homestead exemption from \$75,000 to \$125,000 in the case of a money judgment, increasing the

transparency regarding free bed fund policies and availability, limiting the use of collection agents, and increasing the reporting requirements on these activities.

While these policies have assisted many hospital patients, our healthcare system has changed dramatically since 2003 and we should amend the law to reflect these changes. Critically, in today's system, many patients receive out-patient care at facilities that are owned by hospital systems and thus are billed by the hospitals. SB 683 would ensure that these patients would benefit from the patient protections established in PA 03-266; the site of service should not determine whether a patient is financially protected.

SB 683 also addresses the issues of underinsured patients and would expand these protections to underinsured as well as uninsured patients. I strongly support this concept and would be happy to work with this committee as well as the Office of Health Strategy to create language that would make this a reality.

Thank you for hearing this important legislation.