



Allegheny County Council

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Legislation Text

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Motion of the Council of Allegheny County supporting any and all lawmakers at the various levels of government throughout the country to take swift and expedient action to support legislation or other efforts that will lead to the establishment of a national single-payer healthcare system.

WHEREAS, each and every person in the County of Allegheny - as well as in all of the United States - is deserving of robust, high-quality healthcare that provides excellent, patient-oriented outcomes; and

WHEREAS, in a 2017 study, the American College of Physicians affirmed the clear fact that health insurance reduces mortality and noted that the probability of dying among individuals with health insurance relative to those without health insurance is 0.71 to 0.97 percent, with an estimated 36,000 Americans dying prematurely on a yearly basis because they do not have health insurance; and

WHEREAS, despite paying \$3.3 trillion annually on healthcare, which is nearly twice as much as any other high-income country, the U.S. nonetheless receives poor marks on international scoring matrices; and

WHEREAS, drawing on survey data it has collected since 1998 and supplementing that evidence with comparative data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Health Organization, and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, The Commonwealth Fund found that when evaluating access, healthcare outcomes, and equity, the U.S. ranks last in an 11-country survey. Overall, the U.S. ranks last in overall healthcare system performance; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 2016-2025 national health expenditure forecast, national health spending is projected to grow at a yearly average pace of 5.6 percent and at a pace of 4.7 percent per year per capita; and

WHEREAS, although improvements were made through the Affordable Care Act, many Americans do not have their vital need for health insurance met in any capacity whatsoever, as more than 28 million Americans lack health insurance, with more than 700,000 of those without coverage residing in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, more than half of all workers with employer-based plans have deductibles of \$1,000 or more, and more than one-third of all adults in the country report facing difficulty paying premiums and deductibles, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This employer-based system also poses hazards to vulnerable workers, the underemployed, and the unemployed, who, on average, have worse physical and mental health, yet are less likely to receive the medical care of which they are in need; and

WHEREAS, in September 2017, Senate Bill No. 1804 (S.1804), the Medicare for All Act, was introduced in the U.S. Senate. The scope of this bill is to establish a universal single-payer healthcare program that would guarantee care and ensure quality outcomes to everyone in the country. Additionally, H.R. 676 was introduced in the U.S. House in January of 2017. This bill establishes the Medicare for All Program to provide all individuals residing in the United States and U.S. territories with free health care that includes all medically

necessary care, such as primary care and prevention, dietary and nutritional therapies, prescription drugs, emergency care, long-term care, mental health services, dental services, and vision care; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of such a system could reduce the number of uninsured Americans to zero and lead to most care becoming free at the point of service, delivered under a single and universal program; and

WHEREAS, on the state level, Pennsylvania House Bill No. 1688 (HB 1688) and Pennsylvania Senate Bill No. 1014 (SB 1014), which constitute the Pennsylvania Healthcare for All Plan, seek to establish a public health system for healthcare financing that would deliver healthcare coverage to all Pennsylvania residents, thereby providing for more comprehensive access to necessary and often life-saving care;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Hereby supports any and all lawmakers at the various levels of government throughout the country to take swift and expedient action to support legislation or other efforts that will lead to the establishment of a national single-payer healthcare system; and

IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT

Allegheny County Council recognizes that healthcare should be a fundamental human right.