

Senate Committee On Health Care

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair DeBoer and committee members,

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HJR 203 - amendment to Oregon Constitution establishing obligation of state to ensure every resident has a constitutional right to health care.

Access to health care is already guaranteed because by law all emergency rooms must provide emergency care to any one coming through their doors. Even though we provide health care, making it a constitutional right has a misconception that the voters won't understand. The bill does not mandate health care, and it doesn't even describe a right. It mandates the state to make sure there are enough doctors, clinics and hospitals to provide health care for everyone seeking health care.

There is a misconception that health care is the same as health insurance. That is not true and this bill has nothing to do with health insurance. So the voters do approve this amendment – then what? The misconception will eat up all our tax dollars by claiming mandates that aren't in the language.

The state relies on federal dollars to provide health care, which are declining. A mandate on the state to make sure there are enough providers obligates tax payers to provide dollars that may be competing with other needed programs. It removes flexibility.

Donna Bleiler