

TESTIMONY - Hope Amendment HJR 203

Chair Monness Anderson and members of the committee, I am Bruce Thomson. I am a family physician and an advocate for members of our community who lack access to healthcare due to financial obstacles.

I support HJR203. Oregon voters deserve the opportunity to re-affirm what they have been increasingly saying over the past few years. The passage of Measure 101, and the passage of City and County resolutions (eg. Portland, Eugene, Corvallis and more, Multnomah County) regarding universal access to healthcare, are signals that the majority of Oregonian voters support the notion of health care as a fundamental right.

We all share a common health risk factor. It's called chance, the occurrence of an unexpected medical need or emergency. Too many of our community members, our family members or friends, have had to choose between healthcare and paying to get the car fixed so they can drive to work so they can pay the rent and afford healthy nourishment.

The Oregon Legislature has been enacting health care measures for years. As a medical student I testified in Legislative hearings in the late 1980s regarding the regulation of the sale of tobacco to children and adolescents. There was the Seat belt law, the helmet law and the start of the Oregon Health Plan around the same time. More recently, the Legislature has initiated the transformation of health care delivery in our State.

HJR 203 provides Oregon voters with an opportunity to add their consent to continue to move forward with health care reform. When approved by the voters, the HOPE Amendment will add to our State Constitution our shared belief that access to affordable, cost effective health care is a fundamental right. Sooner or later some state will do this, help Oregon lead the nation.

Thank you for this opportunity and honor to testify in support of HJR 203.