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3 April 2019
Oregon State Senate Health Care Committee
Re: Senate Joint Memorial 2

Madame Chair and members of the committee,

I am Samuel Metz, a Portland physician. Sen. Riley was gracious enough to submit SJM 2 at my request.

SJM 2 asks all members of Oregon's Congressional delegation to support HR 6097.

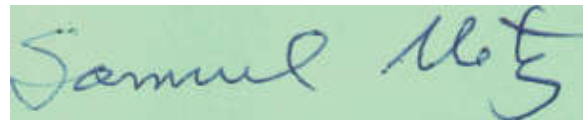
HR 6097 is federal enabling legislation that would allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to grant waivers not just from the Affordable Care Act, as is currently permitted, but from all federal laws governing healthcare spending.

Currently, multiple federal laws prohibit Oregon from regulating 85% of our healthcare spending. State waivers from some of these federal programs are difficult to obtain, like Medicaid. Others are impossible, like ERISA.

HR 6097 is a "state's rights healthcare superwaiver." To qualify, a state must first pass legislation that insures at least as many people, offers at least as generous benefits, and does not increase federal debt. If a waiver is then granted, a state will continue to receive all federal healthcare funding it would otherwise be entitled to.

The import to Oregon is large. With this "state's rights superwaiver," Oregon has the freedom to design its own state-specific program to provide better care to more people for less money. Without this waiver, we don't. Instead, we, and all other states, must wait for Congress to create a rational nationwide plan that will work. That's a long wait.

I encourage members of this committee to vote for SJM 2 in the bipartisan spirit in which it is offered. Former State Representative Knute Buehler, former governor John Kitzhaber, and John Charles of the Cascade Policy Institute support this effort. This spirit encourages Oregon to legally bypass Congressional restraints and, when we deem it appropriate, create healthcare policy that works for Oregon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light green background. The signature reads "Samuel Metz" in a cursive script.

Samuel Metz, MD