

I work in healthcare and know first-hand what Oregonians experience when their health and wellbeing is compromised. Everyday I see uninsured or underinsured patients scraping the bottom of their wallets, borrowing money from friends and relatives, or even taking out loans to pay for life-saving treatment. Some of these patients refuse to beg for money and stop their lifesaving medications. Some of them become financially destitute and bankrupt and then can no longer afford to pay to survive. I have seen my patients get caught in the transition from doing well financially, with excellent expensive private healthcare, to losing their jobs and no longer being able to afford insurance. I have witnessed families in this transition lose everything, including their own lives.

At what cost? The healthcare industry is booming financially. Record profits are distributed to shareholders and corporate wallets. However, they are profiteering on excess and exploiting our families by making them pay for healthcare priced far and beyond its wholesale cost. Some would call this theft, but in our society we call it a success; it's just smart business. These corporations aren't asking their accountants how many people they forced into bankruptcy last quarter. How many lives did their profit margins take in exchange for record sales? They are never going to take accountability for it because they reside under laws legislated to allow them to make these inscrutably calculated measures.

No one should have to endure pain, suffering, and loss of life at the expense of a larger profit. No one should be denied care because they can no longer afford to fatten the debt collectors bank account. These corporations don't care about us and never will. We deserve better healthcare for our families. Health and life should be a right, not a profit margin.

I fully support a bill that brings healthcare to every Oregon resident.