

Submitter: Demetrios Deligiorgis
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB704

Thank you for hearing testimony on this matter.

I write as someone who worked in 2009 in conjunction with the Obama Administration's West Wing Communications Office (OFA via Jeff Gabriel) to try and pass universal healthcare in an effort that compromised into what has become the American Care Act, or Obamacare.

My appeal today is that the legislature endeavor to create true, uncompromised universal healthcare for Oregonians. I have watched since the January, 2010, when I was heartbroken then because of the compromise, as insurance lobbies, alt-right, fiscal conservatives on mostly the Republican side have taken their turns chopping away at the compromise, despite promises that were made to not do so then by such stakeholders.

We are fortunate President Biden's administration has been charged with prioritizing healthcare reform initiative, particularly since he led the helm back in 2009.

As someone who has been a recent victim of violent crime, a savage stabbing in March, 2022, that nearly killed me, I can testify before this body today and say I'm pretty sure if be dead now if OHA hadn't been there to foot the bill until my assailant was caught and forced to pay restitution. Why? Because I wouldn't have gone to the hospital if I'd thought I was going to have a six figure medical bill at the end.

That fateful day, I consciously made a choice as I literally was bleeding out from more than eight hunting knife wounds that I would rather die than be forced to pay exorbitant medical bills that would follow me until my dying days. That day I called to check on my insurance status without telling the operator I was severely wounded, and I was so relieved to learn I'd been automatically added to OHA earlier in the year after being laid off.

But it was too late, I'd already stalled too long, and I lost my strength as I was loading the car for the hospital. If a friend had not called police for a welfare check, I surely would have died right where I was passing out, beside my truck, when police pulled up and were able to render aid and call for ambulance and fire units.

I'm trying, so very hard, to make good on my second chance at life, even through severe PTSD that keeps me indoors, at home, nearly all day every day. I can't help but think of how many others have been faced with that same decision I was faced

with, and opted to die out, or delay getting medical attention at first onset of injury or pathology.

I also can't help but think how much better my assailant's mental health may have been had he had unfettered access to mental and physical medical care, who knows, I may never have been stabbed in the first place.

This is why an uncompromised universal healthcare system should be the sought after model. Human beings reared in the free market and capitalist society should not be incentivized to profit from the suffering and ill health of other human beings, which is the case for for-profit driven institutions, insurance companies, medical sales, and prescription drug organizations which are thriving in the current climate, at expense of our most vulnerable, marginalized communities, least educated residents. This is cannibalism, plain and simple.

I pray for a day in 2037 when it becomes obvious looking back after a successful decade of universal healthcare implementation that we all pause and wonder: how on earth did we do it the other way? Much like we'd do today thinking about how we survived before cell phones.

Medical care should join housing as a human right, and not the purvey of those seeking to profit from the needs, and maladies, of others.