

Submitter: Warren George
On Behalf Of: Oregon Elway Poll Respondents
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB704

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON SB 704 – Establishes Universal Health Plan Governance Board and directs board to create comprehensive plan for implementing Universal Health Plan beginning in 2027.

Dear Friends,

My name is Warren George. In my main career I was Director of Primary Operations and Plant Manager for major titanium plants in Albany Oregon and Richland Washington. In later life I also spent over a decade as a management consultant on large projects and working with difficult problems.

I did not enter through the same door of health care advocacy as some others who have provided testimony. As a business manager and analyst I have personally seen the disastrous effects of employer-tied health care on international competitiveness , resulting in the loss of middle class jobs while our high cost system also causes much personal anxiety from cost, complexity, and uncertainty of access. As someone who tracks a variety of economic statistics I am alarmed at how the wrecking ball of employer-tied health care has contributed to the bottom 40% of American earners losing about one third of their income in the last three decades because it is no longer economical to hire them. To not do anything to try to reverse these trends is unthinkable.

In the past 10 years I have put many thousands of hours working on the financial aspects to make universal care in Oregon a working reality instead of a theoretical concept. In 2018 I worked on detailed design guides and tools. In 2019 I commissioned the Elway Poll of Oregon voters that showed 62% would definitely or probably support a tax two to three times the Oregon Income tax system in order to provide care to everyone. In 2021 and 2022 I was appointed to the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care, filling the task force position for financial management and change management. I contributed extensively to many sections of the final report. I personally wrote the recommendation paragraph on which the task force voted unanimously to recommend the creation of the board as now being described by SB 704.

For those to whom labels make a difference, I am a Republican, but some things are too big for “sides”. In the 2019 Elway Poll, sides made far less difference than they make in this capitol building. In the poll, majority support for publicly coordinated universal care held true both Republican and Democrat represented areas of the states. Congressional District 2, which voted two to one for Donald Trump in 2016

and 2020 polled two to one in favor of universal care.

The support is there, the obstacles are large, but still smaller than the harm of doing nothing in terms of anxiety, loss of employment, and cruel inequity. Universal simplicity can be achieved through the concepts of SB 704.

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