

2020 -- H 7829

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LC003942  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PASS LEGISLATION  
ESTABLISHING AN IMPROVED "MEDICARE FOR ALL" SINGLE PAYER PROGRAM  
THAT WOULD PROVIDE UNIVERSAL COMPREHENSIVE AFFORDABLE HEALTH  
CARE

Introduced By: Representatives Walsh, Ajello, Kislak, and Ranglin-Vassell

Date Introduced: February 26, 2020

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

1           WHEREAS, Between 1991 and 2014, health care spending in Rhode Island per person  
2 rose by over 250 percent - rising much faster than income and greatly reducing disposable  
3 income; and

4           WHEREAS, It is estimated that by 2025, the cost of health insurance for an average  
5 family of four will equal their annual income; and

6           WHEREAS, In the United States, about 66 percent of personal bankruptcies have been  
7 medical cost-related and of these, about three-fourths of those bankrupted had health insurance;  
8 and

9           WHEREAS, Rhode Island private businesses bear most of the costs of employee health  
10 insurance coverage and spend significant time and money choosing from a confusing array of  
11 increasingly expensive plans which do not provide comprehensive coverage; and

12           WHEREAS, Rhode Island employees and retirees are losing significant wages and  
13 pensions as they are forced to pay higher amounts of health insurance and health care costs; and

14           WHEREAS, Rhode Island and its municipalities face enormous Other Post-Employment  
15 Benefits (OPEB) unfunded liabilities mostly due to health insurance costs; and

16           WHEREAS, Although Rhode Island significantly expanded health care coverage for its  
17 citizens under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), as of 2018, about 42,000 Rhode Islanders  
18 remain uninsured, and even fully implemented, the ACA would leave many Rhode Islanders

1 uninsured and many more underinsured - resulting in numerous deaths per year; and

2 WHEREAS, Efforts at the federal level to repeal or defund the ACA, Medicare and  
3 Medicaid further threaten the health and welfare of Rhode Islanders; and

4 WHEREAS, The United States has hundreds of health insurance carriers (i.e., multiple  
5 "payers") who make our health care system unjustifiably inefficient and expensive - with about  
6 1/3 of every health care dollar going towards administrative costs and not towards actual health  
7 care; and

8 WHEREAS, Every industrialized nation in the world, except the United States, offers  
9 universal health care to its citizens under a "single payer" program and enjoys better health  
10 outcomes for about one-half the cost; and

11 WHEREAS, Health care is rationed under our current multi-payer system, despite the  
12 fact that Americans already pay enough money to have comprehensive and universal health  
13 insurance under a single-payer system; and

14 WHEREAS, Single payer health care would establish a true "free market" system where  
15 doctors compete for patients rather than health insurance companies dictating which patients are  
16 able to see which doctors and setting reimbursement rates; and

17 WHEREAS, The high costs of medical care could be lowered significantly if the state  
18 could negotiate on behalf of all its residents for bulk purchasing, as well as gain access to usage  
19 and price information currently kept confidential by private health insurers as "proprietary  
20 information"; and

21 WHEREAS, Proposed federal improved Medicare-For-All single payer legislation will  
22 provide comprehensive coverage by substituting lower amounts of increased taxes for higher  
23 amounts of premiums, co-pays, deductibles and payments for amounts in excess of caps; and

24 WHEREAS, Such comprehensive coverage will include vision, hearing and dental care,  
25 mental health and substance abuse services, as well as prescription medications, medical  
26 equipment, supplies, diagnostics and treatments; and

27 WHEREAS, Health care providers will benefit under improved Medicare-For-All single  
28 payer because they will spend significantly less time with administrative work caused by multiple  
29 health insurance company requirements and barriers to care delivery and will spend significantly  
30 less for overhead costs because of streamlined billing; and

31 WHEREAS, There is extensive research that shows an improved Medicare-For-All single  
32 payer program will benefit all Americans by providing universal comprehensive affordable health  
33 care coverage; establishing a funding system that is public, progressive, and sustainable; and  
34 containing health care costs; now, therefore be it

1           RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
2 Providence Plantations hereby recognizes the need for the United States government to  
3 implement an improved Medicare-For-All single payer program and hereby respectfully urges  
4 Congress to pass single payer legislation currently before it as HR 1384 and S. 1129; and be it  
5 further

6           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
7 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the clerk of the United States House of  
8 Representatives, the clerk of the United States Senate, and to members of the Rhode Island  
9 Congressional Delegation.

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