

2022 -- S 2331

=====
LC004392
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE RHODE ISLAND CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO PRIORITIZE
RACIAL JUSTICE IN HEALTHCARE AND CHAMPION THE PASSAGE OF THE
MEDICARE FOR ALL ACT

Introduced By: Senators Mendes, Mack, Calkin, Anderson, and Acosta

Date Introduced: February 15, 2022

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, A national health insurance program will enable all United States residents
2 to receive the healthcare that our country needs to survive and thrive; and

3 WHEREAS, All people are deserving of healthcare, however, the current, privatized
4 healthcare system deprives many Americans of timely, effective, affordable, and accessible
5 healthcare; and

6 WHEREAS, The attempted privatization of Medicare, via the Direct Contracting Entities
7 (DCEs) created by the Trump administration's Medicare Direct Contracting pilot program, which
8 financially incentivizes DCEs to deny Americans medically necessary care, endangers the lives of
9 at least 30 million traditional Medicare beneficiaries, and threatens the existing Medicare
10 program's effectiveness as a public, nonprofit, social-insurance program; and

11 WHEREAS, The United States currently spends almost twice as much per capita on
12 healthcare as comparable countries, and despite that cost, ranks only 35th in the world by global
13 health standards including average life expectancy, infant mortality, maternal mortality, and death
14 from preventable diseases; and

15 WHEREAS, The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has proven that depriving one person of
16 healthcare injures all people; and

17 WHEREAS, The matrix of multiple health crises impacting Americans has
18 disproportionately impacted people of color, from the growing environmental crisis which has
19 revealed the devastating rise in environmental racism, to the COVID-19 pandemic which

1 decimates communities of color; and

2 WHEREAS, Fifty-five percent of the uninsured are people of color; and

3 WHEREAS, Black Americans suffer higher death rates at an earlier age than white
4 Americans due to heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and infant mortality; and

5 WHEREAS, Black American women are three to four times more likely than white
6 women to die in childbirth; and

7 WHEREAS, Black American and Latinx students are more likely to experience health
8 risks due to exposure to toxins and air pollution at school and at home; and

9 WHEREAS, The current, privatized healthcare system perpetuates discrimination based
10 on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and
11 where one lives, which is inherent to profit-based healthcare systems; and

12 WHEREAS, People of color make up 42 percent of the nonelderly U.S. population, yet
13 account for over half of the total nonelderly uninsured population; and

14 WHEREAS, Latinx and Black Americans have significantly higher uninsured rates (19
15 percent and 11 percent respectively) compared to white Americans; and

16 WHEREAS, Uninsured Black Americans often delay preventative care and obtain more
17 expensive emergency treatment as a last resort; and

18 WHEREAS, Latinx Americans are the most uninsured population in the United States
19 today, and comprise much of the workforce that is unable to get health coverage through their
20 jobs; and

21 WHEREAS, Medicaid, which is a lifeline for many people of color and low-income
22 patients, is not accepted at many hospitals and doctors' offices, leaving many without access to
23 necessary care; and

24 WHEREAS, Black maternal and prenatal health access remains at crisis levels; and

25 WHEREAS, In the for-profit healthcare system, racial bias mars the entirety of American
26 healthcare, and patients need to be able to get the care they seek when it is appropriate and
27 convenient for them. Communities of color need a healthcare system that rectifies these long-
28 standing structural biases, and Medicare for All is that system; and

29 WHEREAS, Medical debt remains a glaring issue for Black Americans with nearly one
30 in three Black Americans aged 18 to 64 having past-due medical bills; and

31 WHEREAS, Ineffectively regulated costs of medical care create such a burden for
32 Americans that one-third of all GoFundMe online fundraising campaigns are created to assist
33 with paying medical bills; and

34 WHEREAS, The inability to pay overwhelming medical bills continues to be a leading

1 cause of personal bankruptcy in America; and

2 WHEREAS, Americans frequently choose to forego healthcare because they cannot
3 afford it; and

4 WHEREAS, The uninsured rate in the United States has risen to over 31 million, with the
5 greatest increases among women, young adults, and people currently earning lower than average
6 wages; and

7 WHEREAS, Medicare for All would support the health and economic security of patients
8 of color at all income levels, including finally providing full healthcare coverage for all
9 reproductive health services, as well as controlling the costs of prescription drugs; and

10 WHEREAS, Medicare for All will eliminate the idea of “out of network” providers; and

11 WHEREAS, Passing the Medicare for All Act will be difficult because of the inertia of
12 history along with the present-day forces that oppose a racially equitable healthcare system,
13 namely members of Congress, who are influenced by lobbyists pushing a for-profit healthcare
14 machine and/or committed to perpetuating a right-wing agenda; now, therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby urgently requests that
16 Rhode Island's Congressional Delegation supports and prioritizes passage of H.R. 1976, the
17 Medicare for All Act of 2021, and its Senate companion bill. We moreover urge our delegation to
18 co-sponsor, publicly champion, and whip votes sufficient for the passage of the Medicare for All
19 Act of 2021 into law; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
21 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation.

=====
LC004392
=====