

Submitter: Lou Sinniger  
On Behalf Of: Oregon AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 41  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB704

Lou Sinniger, President, Oregon AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 41: I spent a 30 year career as a Union Representative fighting for justice and well being for our union members mostly in the public employer sector. The problems with employer provided healthcare in the public sector are three fold.

1) The cost is enormous for both the employee and the employer who is paying 20% or more of payroll for health insurance. The employees also pay a portion of their wages on the premium, out of pockets, deductibles, Rx copays, and other point of service expenses.

2) What people usually don't realize is that these public employer expenses are being paid with tax dollars. In other words the extreme cost of health insurance including pharmaceuticals are already adding to the tax burden. Often this goes unnoticed or is lumped into the "total compensation package".

3) The health insurance is only provided while the person is employed. As we saw when the pandemic hit people who lost their job lost their access to health insurance and their healthcare. We still have 300,000 people on the OHP plan because of job loss. If you lose your job, you lose access to health care. In addition, employees must also carefully consider when retiring or when they want to move to a better job whether they will have access to healthcare.

I encourage the Senate Health Committee and all our Legislative Representatives to support and pass SB704. By establishing a fully staffed and paid Governance Board, who is directed to establish a self funded plan to cover the healthcare needs for everybody in Oregon, will solve the lack of access to health care and some of the costs above.

By moving to one universal health plan the administrative costs and profits seen in the health insurance industry will be eliminated. These costs and profits we know run between 20% to 30%. For the public employers the costs will be substantially reduced by half or more. For the employees, their premium costs will be reduced and they will no longer have out of pocket, deductibles, or other costs at the point of service. Health insurance costs will be reduced therefore reducing the tax burden. Above all the greatest benefit to everyone is freedom. Free to retire. Free to start a business. Free to get a better job. Free from medical debt. It is time too stop burdening the bargaining table with health insurance costs and dependencies. Take health insurance off the bargaining table. Provide healthcare to everybody.

Please, support and pass SB704

Thank You for being a representative for the people.