Submitter: Rachel Levy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure: SB704

I work in mental health and suicide prevention.   There is overwhelming evidence that a single payer system would greatly improve mental health outcomes and reduce suicide risk. Here are some of the reasons:

1.   Lack of access to needed health care can drastically damage a person's quality of life, take an enormous toll on a person's mental health and put them at increased risk for suicide.

2. Lack of access to mental health care is a huge problem in this country.   Of course, people without insurance often cannot afford mental health care treatment. Even when someone has insurance, they often can't find a provider who takes their insurance, or they have to switch providers due to insurance changes, even when they are established in long-term care. Single-payer would solve all of these issues.

3. More and more people in this country are becoming houseless due to lack of health care coverage. Untreated mental health and medical issues can leave people unable to work and unable to keep their homes.   Medical debt - even among uninsured people - can leave people unable to afford their homes and out on the street. This should never happen, and it would not happen under a single-payer system.

No one should ever have to worry about losing their medical coverage, and no one should be denied needed care because either they don't have insurance or because they have the "wrong" kind of insurance.   Single-payer is the only logical and humane solution.