

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my opinions and position as **opposed to** this bill:

H.B. No. 5324 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF "URGENT CARE CLINIC"
AND REQUIRING THE PROVISION OF CHARITY CARE.

I am strongly opposed to the Provision of Charity Care in this bill. Specifically regarding urgent care clinics that are privately owned small businesses, they should be treated as any other privately owned small business that provides goods or services and exists only due to the significant investment of research, time, money and effort on the part of the owner. Small business investment is the backbone of the economy, job growth and tax base for our country and for our state. Unlike hospitals, which receive government subsidies to offset the burden of non-paying patients, these privately owned urgent care centers are small businesses that exist only because individual citizens follow a dream and put their life savings and full effort into their vision. The requirement of "Charity Care" would place an unfair burden on these private businesses and interfere with the ability of these businesses to provide high-quality care to their patients and collect a fair reimbursement for the service provided. These facilities are saving millions of taxpayer dollars in identifying early stage health issues and keeping patients out of the emergency department on a daily basis, to unfairly burden them with providing unpaid care will serve a devastating blow to a business in which it is very difficult to make a profit.

A lifelong Connecticut resident, I am involved with Doctors Express Urgent Care, where we have created 53 new jobs over the past 24 months in just 2 locations by investing millions of dollars and taking on significant debt to create beautiful medical facilities with x-ray machines, labs, EKG, Spirometry and many other services that cannot be found in a primary care physician's office. We also operate with 2x – 3x the staffing level of a primary care office to accommodate unknown waves of patient flow since we do not take appointments. Rather, we take patients when they need to be seen and practice a broad variety of services, delivered with tremendously high time-efficiency and at a fraction of the cost of the emergency department. We are also open extended hours during weekdays and 8-5 on weekends. These are very expensive facilities to run and despite these very high costs, reimbursements are only slightly higher those of a primary care physician. This coupled with the costs of doing business in this highly regulated industry with regard to compliance, reporting, disposal of hazardous materials, etc. makes the prospect of "Charity Care" potentially crippling.

In principle, the "Charity Care" aspect of this bill is no different than requiring a restaurant or grocery store, that has invested in designing and building a facility, purchasing equipment and goods, hiring staff to prepare or stock the items, to give them away for free. This kind of bill will curb investment into this important area of health care service and would be a terrible strike against small business in the state of Connecticut as potential investors see it as an act of expropriation and feel a lack of security of their investment in our capital markets.

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