

## Insurance and Real Estate Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-340

AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTION EFFORTS BY HOSPITALS AND  
COLLECTION AGENTS AGAINST UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED

**Title:** PATIENTS.

**Vote Date:** 3/10/2020

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/10/2020

**File No.:**

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### **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist.

### **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The bill was envisioned to stop collection agencies and hospitals from aggressively pursuing payment from individuals who are not insured or are under insured. This results in large amounts of medical debt in our state that this bill attempts to help alleviate.

### **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Ted Doolittle Office of the Healthcare Advocate** supports and offers comment that hospitals can do things other agencies do on a similar scale with a smaller administrative budget when it comes to identifying patient's household incomes as a percentage of FPL. They also note that the High Deductible Health Plan Task Force (HDHP) did not take up the question of collection practices in its recommendations but did repeatedly hear from providers and hospital representatives that collecting from people with HDHPs posed a problem to providing timely care.

**Senator Martin M. Looney, President Pro Tempore** supports the bill as it would update patient protections in the Connecticut statutes that would protect those under or not insured from aggressive collection agencies.

### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Raphael L. Podolsky, Connecticut Legal Services** supports the bill as medical debt is the most common debt in this country and this bill goes a long way in helping to stop medical debt from increasing.

**Universal Health Care Advocate** supports the bill as Connecticut is no stranger to medical debt and they are glad that section 1 adds provisions to protect underinsured patients who have High Deductible Health Plans.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**The Connecticut Hospital Association** opposes the bill as it would limit the amount hospitals could collect from people on high deductible health care plans which was not suggested by the High Deductible Task Health Care Plan Task Force

**Eric H Opim, Attorney, Milford, CT** opposes the bill as it would discriminate against his client by stopping the debt collection procedure. They argue the Court system is the only appropriate place to make these kinds of decisions.

**Putnam, Lowry & Clayton, LLC** opposes the bill as it limits the hospitals methods of debt collections. It does not allow them to conduct wage garnishment and he argues that we may not realize it but hospitals are business too and need to get their money eventually.

**Reported by: Lawrence Sanchez**

**Date: 03/31/2020**