



Testimony in Support of S.B.1192, An Act Concerning Hospital Financial Assistance

Public Health Committee
February 3, 2025

Mendi Blue Paca
President & CEO, Fairfield County's Community Foundation

Senator Anwar, Representative McCarthy Vahey, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, Fairfield County's Community Foundation is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony supporting **of S.B.1192, An Act Concerning Hospital Financial Assistance.**

Fairfield County's Community Foundation serves the 23 towns and cities in Fairfield County. We work closely with community organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and philanthropists to address challenges and identify opportunities to create a Fairfield County where everyone has an equitable opportunity to thrive. Informed by three decades of partnering with and serving our community, we have awarded over \$400 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond.

The Foundation is centering our investments on creating systemic and structural change in education, housing, health, and income and asset building to achieve greater racial equity and create a stronger, more thriving region.

Medical debt is a major and growing contributor to the cycle of economic and health inequity. When medical debt is sent to collections, individuals can face decreased access to credit, increased likelihood of bankruptcy, and/or costly and lengthy collection litigation. They also experience high-stress levels and poor health and are forced to delay or forgo medical care.

All nonprofit hospitals are required to offer financial assistance to patients. However, **45% of nonprofit hospitals routinely send medical bills to patients whose incomes are low enough to qualify for financial assistance**. This legislation will improve access to and awareness of financial assistance policies to help prevent medical debt. Financial assistance has been found to increase initial healthcare utilization and receipt of high-value care significantly.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **S.B.1192, An Act Concerning Hospital Financial Assistance**. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lutonya Russell-Humes, Vice President of Grants and Programs, lrussell-humes@fccfoundation.org, 203-750-3223.

Sincerely,

Mendi Blue Paca
President & CEO