



TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 177

Ohio General Assembly
Senate Judiciary Committee

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Lori Kershner
On behalf of Opportunity Solutions Project

Chairman Bacon and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I write to you today on behalf of Opportunity Solutions Project (OSP). OSP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization that seeks to improve lives by advocating for public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, individual liberty, and a limited, accountable government.

Senate Bill 177, or Volunteer Care, sponsored by your fellow committee member Sen. Lehner, seeks to incentivize health care professionals to donate their time and talents serving low-income, uninsured and underinsured patients by offering protections from lawsuits while they provide free care, unless they are grossly neglect or commit willful misconduct. There are clear and strong protections in place to protect patients from neglect and/or misconduct.

By providing common-sense liability protections for medical professionals who voluntarily serve those in need, we can help ensure that more Ohioans receive high-quality medical care.

This approach has proven highly effective in other states where it has been implemented and is estimated to bring \$60 Million in free health care to poor Ohioans.

Although the number of uninsured Ohioans has decreased in recent years, nearly 800,000 remain uninsured. Many more, even those with insurance, live in medically underserved communities or struggle to receive the care they need because of administrative red tape.

Ohio is fortunate to have many caring, giving health care providers in our state, but they often feel constrained by frivolous liability concerns when considering whether or not to donate time and resources to low-income patients.

In the state of Florida, because of this program, they engage 25,000 volunteers, 200 clinics in 47 counties. Through 2014, there were 2.3 Million free visits provided to Floridians with \$1.3 Billion in donated goods and services from 2010-2014.

It's time for Ohio to follow suit and support and incentivize health care professionals who want to serve low-income Ohioans, while providing safeguards for patients against neglect and misconduct. This common-sense policy will have a significant positive impact and will unleash the powers of Volunteer Care in our state.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.