



State Representative Tim Barhorst

*House Bill 49 Sponsor Testimony
Senate Small Business & Economic Opportunity Committee
September 20th, 2023*

Chairman Lang, Vice-Chair Wilkin, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Small Business & Economic Opportunity Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 49 or the Hospital Price Transparency Act.

Although it might not seem like it on paper, this bill has major implications for Ohio's main street economy and small businesses. The healthcare industry is the fourth largest sector in our state's economy – accounting for approximately \$60 billion towards Ohio's GDP and 18% of our national economy. Yet, it continues to be one of the costliest sectors to businesses and families alike.

For far too long, consumers and patients have had to make significant financial decisions despite an asymmetry of information regarding the costs of elective services & products provided by hospital systems. I consider it *common sense* that a patient should be able to know exactly how much they have to pay before making a decision that concerns their health or medical well-being.

This standard of transparency should not be considered alien, profound, or even burdensome. Senators, I ask you to think of any business, sector, or industry where the consumer is expected ***to make a purchase or enter a voluntary exchange without seeing the price-tag beforehand.***

Ohio employers cannot expect their clients and customers to buy their products or use their services without providing a price. So why should they be left to guess when trying to provide affordable healthcare plans and benefits for their employees?

HB 49 passed with bipartisan support in committee and 90 votes on the House Floor because all of us understood that healthcare holds the largest cost burden on business and families, so it's time to pursue *good policy* measures that address this issue head on.

3 consecutive Presidential Administrations have re-asserted the emphasis on hospital price transparency. 13 years ago, the Affordable Care Act was passed on March 23, 2010, and since then – the cost of healthcare has tripled while patients, taxpayers, and small businesses have been left holding the bag with no end in sight.

Let me be clear, the intent behind this bill is not to target Ohio hospitals whether as businesses or entities that provide cutting-edge, life-saving treatments, procedures, and other services with global reputations. However, the fact that only 20-25% of the largest hospital systems in the

United States are deemed compliant with federal transparency requirements is unacceptable - *Ohio must close this gap within our own border.*

Consider the implications this bill will have towards our efforts to make Ohio a competitive place to live, work, and play. Our state can join many others who have either enacted similar legislation or are joining us in doing so.

Taking this opportunity of modernizing our state's healthcare system through transparency will allow our state to attract and incentivize business & people to remain or even move to our great state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 49. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.