



March 5, 2024

Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee

Dear Chair Craven, and House Judiciary Committee members,

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is pleased to submit the following testimony to the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee **in support of HB 7103**, an act to prohibit credit reporting, executions, and attachments against a principal residence for judgments based on medical debt, defines medical debt as an amount for the receipt of healthcare services, products, or devices and, caps judgment interest at 3%.

At LLS, our mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS exists to find cures, ensure access to treatments, and improve survivorship for blood cancer patients.

The Consumer Protection Financial Bureau (CFPB) in a report¹ published in 2022 determined that one out of every five Americans has medical debt of which \$88B is currently in collections. In the same report, the CFPB determined that medical debt is the #1 reason for individual bankruptcy and that medical debt is the least predictive debt indicator of future repayment of all debt.

LLS is working individually and with other patient advocacy groups on medical debt in numerous states nationwide, specifically in other northeast states (MA, ME, VT, NJ, NY & PA). LLS released a poll² last October that over 90% of U.S. adults agree that elected officials should pass policies that protect people with serious illnesses like cancer from medical debt and harassment from collection agencies.

HB 7103 has taken many great strides to do that. The bill:

- Prohibits wage garnishment in collection of medical debt;
- Prohibits liens against a primary resident in the collection of medical debt;
- Prohibits the reporting of medical debt to credit agencies; and
- Caps interest rate on medical debt to not exceed 3%

We thank Representative Shallcross-Smith for sponsoring this legislation and urge the members of the Committee to pass HB 7103 to protect patients and their families from additional medical debt burden.

Sincerely,
Ernie Davis
Director, Northeast State Government Affairs
ernie.davis@lls.org

¹ <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/cfpb-estimates-88-billion-in-medical-bills-on-credit-reports/>

² <https://www.lls.org/news/nearly-1-2-patients-medical-debt-feel-trapped-new-poll-leading-healthcare-orgs-finds>