



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland

Testimony in **Support** of SB0759 **Health - Prescription Drug Affordability Board**

TO: Senator Dolores Kelley and the members of the Finance Committee.

FROM: Jan Bird, Treasurer, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

DATE: March 6, 2019

I am Jan Bird representing the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Legislative Ministry of Maryland, an advocacy organization, with members in UU congregations throughout the state. UULM-MD joined advocates to support system changes, incremental advancements, and to protect the progress made in health care as this has been a priority nationally and locally for UUs for many years. One of our UU unifying principles is a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of each person. However, we do not see this reflected in some public policies such as ones which would end outrageous and unfair costs for prescription medications.

SB 0759 will create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board that could help determine how best to make prescriptions more affordable. This issue is so important that a Kaiser Family Foundation 2017 survey found that 74% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans support allowing an independent group to oversee prescription drug pricing.

Whether you are a parent with a sick child or an adult with a serious illness, knowing that there is a medication that will help but that you can't acquire because you can't pay for it has to be one of life's most agonizing situations. This is made even more difficult when you learn that pharmaceutical companies have arbitrarily raised prices multiple times in the U.S., but the same drug can be purchased for much less in by our North American neighbors and other countries. We all know people who have had to make the choice of paying for their prescribed medications, which can be essential to the quality and length of their lives, instead of paying other necessary expenses.

UUs in Maryland are very fortunate that we have been able to be advocates with legislators who are responsive and care about the most powerless people who are too often forgotten by those at the federal level and in other states. We thank you for your consideration and appreciate our opportunities to present our liberal faith perspective on issues and to work with you to make a difference in Maryland. Margaret Mead's quote seems to appropriate for the small state of Maryland: *"Never doubt a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

We hope Maryland will continue to be national leaders by taking on this challenge to overcome the powerful pharmaceutical lobby. Please join the five bi-partisan co-sponsors serving on your committee and **issue a favorable report on SB 0759**. Thank you!