

March 5, 2025

The Honorable Gary VanDeaver
Chair
House Committee on Public Health
1100 Congress Avenue, Room E2.172
Austin, TX 78701

The Honorable Elizabeth Campos
Vice Chair
House Committee on Public Health
1100 Congress Avenue, Room E2.172
Austin, TX 78701

RE: Support of House Bill 251, Relating to price estimates and billing requirements for certain health care facilities.

Dear Chair VanDeaver, Vice-Chair Campos, and Members of the Committee:

As a representative of Texas' 3.3 million small businesses, Small Business Majority writes today in support of HB 251, legislation that will give Texans the ability to make informed decisions about their health based on fair and transparent price estimates.

Small Business Majority is a small business organization that empowers diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. We engage our network of more than 85,000 small businesses and 1,500 business and community organizations to advocate for public policy solutions and deliver resources to entrepreneurs that promote equitable small business growth.

Access to affordable and quality healthcare coverage remains central to the success and economic wellbeing of the state's small business community. But as the cost of providing healthcare coverage continues to increase, so too has inaccurate cost estimates. While facilities are currently required to provide a price estimate from a facility within 10 days, HB 251 would require estimates within 24 hours, and it would prohibit bills that are 5% more than the estimate. A bill that exceeds a 5% increase must provide an explanation and is ineligible for collections or reports to the credit bureau.

In virtually every other industry, a business is upfront and transparent about the cost of its product or service before the customer commits to purchasing it. There is no reason that the hospital industry cannot operate like these other businesses. HB 251 helps to address some of the unfair business practices of the healthcare industry by ensuring that small business owners, their employees and other customers are informed about their options before accessing health services. This will allow business owners to get back to focusing on their business rather than spending hours figuring out their medical bills. We urge the committee to move forward and pass House Bill 251 to support small businesses across the state.

Sincerely,

Awesta Sarkash
Public Policy Director
Small Business Majority