



August 18, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 716 (Boerner Horvath) – Ground Ambulance Surprise Billing - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Portantino

On behalf of California's small business owners, Small Business Majority writes in support of AB 716 (Boerner Horvath), which will prevent consumers from being charged an out-of-network surprise bill for ground ambulance services, both emergency and non-emergency, and protect uninsured Californians from being charged inflated ambulance rates.

Small Business Majority is a national small business organization that empowers America's 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 deliver resources to entrepreneurs and advocate for public policy solutions that promote inclusive small business growth.

Access to affordable healthcare is a barrier to entrepreneurship and a top concern for small business owners. In Small Business Majority's [polling](#) of California small business owners, we found that 91% of small business owners agree that there should be more transparency on pricing and quality to allow patients to make informed decisions about where to receive care.

Too many Californian small business owners receive big surprise bills after being taken to a hospital by an ambulance. A surprise bill happens when a consumer unknowingly is seen by an out-of-network provider for a service, and the consumer is billed charges that their health plan or insurer will not pay. In the case of ambulances, the consumer has no choice whether the ambulance that arrives is contracted with their insurer or health plan, resulting in many surprise bills.

For ambulance rides, California patients often receive a surprise bill of over \$1,000 and even more than \$2,000 depending on the provider and insurer. This can be financially destabilizing, especially for low- and moderate-income Californians who lack significant savings. As a result, some may not call 911 for fear of the ambulance bill, delaying needed care.

AB 716 prohibits ambulance providers from sending any bill beyond the in-network cost-sharing amount to patients or to collections. To protect the uninsured from being charged inflated rates, AB 716 prohibits people without insurance from being charged a bill greater than the Medi-Cal or Medicare rate for the ambulance service, whichever is greater. This bill also includes debt collections protections for consumers with and without insurance. For these reasons, Small Business Majority requests your support for AB 716.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bianca Blomquist".

Bianca Blomquist
California Policy Director
Small Business Majority