



## For Immediate Release

### CONTACT

Julie Sampson [julie@citizenaction-il.org](mailto:julie@citizenaction-il.org) 773-505-2016 or

Stephani Becker [stephanibecker@povertylaw.org](mailto:stephanibecker@povertylaw.org) 773-655-1841

Protect our Care IL applauds the passage of [HB 2296, SFA2](#) - a bill to protect consumers and small businesses in Illinois from excessive health insurance rate hikes and provide transparency to the process of setting health insurance rates. This bill will give the Illinois Department of Insurance (DOI) the authority that 41 other states already have to approve, modify or deny rate increases that are deemed excessive.

Health care premiums are skyrocketing, especially for those who don't get financial assistance in the HealthCare.gov marketplace and for small businesses. During the rate review process, a state's insurance regulators must review proposed increases or decreases for health plans. Unlike 41 other states, Illinois regulators do not have the legal authority to reject or modify excessive increases outright. This bill changes that.

"We are proud to support the passage of this critical consumer protection bill in collaboration with Senator Fine, Leader Gabel, the Governor's Office, DOI and industry," said Stephani Becker, Associate Director of Health Care Justice at the Shriver Center on Poverty Law. "The Department of Insurance will now have the authority to reject unreasonable rate increases. As Illinois is about to run its own state-based exchange, this type of authority and transparency will be essential for individuals and small businesses. This is a big step forward in making healthcare coverage more affordable for consumers in our state."

"This common-sense bill gives state government the tools to put working people's pockets ahead of insurance company profits," said Julie Sampson, Co-Director of Citizen Action/Illinois. "We appreciate all who worked and voted to bring Illinois in line with 41 other states and we look forward to the Governor signing this measure."

HB 2296 will address rising health care costs for small business owners in Illinois. "Escalating health insurance premiums make it difficult for many small businesses to offer their employees health insurance, said Elliot Richardson, President of the Small Business Advocacy Council. "Excessive premiums impact the cash flow of small businesses and make it difficult for them to compete for employees. This legislation should help make health insurance more affordable for small businesses and provide needed transparency."

As part of the transparency provisions of the bill, the Illinois Department of Insurance will be required to post the proposed rates and summaries of the reasoning behind the rates to their website every year. The public will be invited to comment on the rates before DOI either approves, rejects or modifies the them. In addition, DOI will publish an annual Coverage, Affordability and Cost Transparency Report to examine the trends and cost-drivers of healthcare in the state.

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[Protect Our Care IL](#) is a statewide coalition of health care advocates, providers, consumers, small business advocates and workers committed to ensuring coverage and access to affordability, comprehensive and quality health insurance.