

Written testimony template for SB 5169

(Insert date)

Senator Annette Cleveland
Chairperson
Senate Health & Long-term Care Committee

POSITION: PRO/SUPPORT

Dear Senator Cleveland and members of the Health & Long-term Care Committee:

As a public sector retiree and member of the Retired Public Employees Council of Washington, I am writing to enthusiastically express my support for **SB 5169: An Act Relating to Healthcare Plans administered by the Health Care Authority for Medicare-eligible Retirees**. I am writing to ask you to pass this bill out of your committee.

This bill is direly needed because it preserves healthcare choice for retirees who receive their medical benefits through the Public Employees Benefits Board. And, the bill also increases accountability for the Health Care Authority to do a better job in serving seniors like and responding to their needs.

Health care is deeply personal, and I believe that every senior should have the right to choose the healthcare plan that meets his/her/their needs. That choice rests with me as a retiree and his/her immediate family – not a state agency. This bill preserves healthcare choice for seniors who want to choose from among a breadth of high-quality, affordable healthcare plans that include not only self-insured plans like UMP Classic Medicare but also privatized options.

(If you are covered under UMP Classic Medicare, share insights as to why preserving this plan is important. How has this plan made a difference in your life? Why is this plan valuable for you or your partner/spouse? Maybe you or your spouse survived a deadly illness and could only remain finically solvent despite high medical costs because of the robust nature of this plan? Be personal and brief!)

This bill is also vitally important because it provides needed accountability for the Health Care Authority and their work with stakeholders. (Add a customized statement such as this one ... As a long-standing retiree, I'm not alone in my ongoing concerns about HCA. I have had problems getting information from HCA staff about healthcare plan choices. I have spent hours on the phone with their call center staff who are polite but not helpful.)

The listening sessions and public forums they will be hosting this year are designed for the agency to hear from stakeholders and to adjust their policy making and practices accordingly. The agency doesn't do a good job serving retirees and has not been responsible to stakeholders' needs. It is imperative that the work they will be doing this year with stakeholders is reported to the Legislature for full accountability.

Please vote in favor of this bill in Executive Session.

Sincerely,

(name)

(city, state, phone)