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House Passes Health Care as a Right Amendment Referral

The Hope Amendment asks voters if health care should be a fundamental right

SALEM – The Oregon House of Representatives today passed [House Joint Resolution 203](#), the Constitutional referral that would make cost effective and affordable health care a fundamental right.

Rep. Mitch Greenlick (D-Portland), a health policy expert and chair of the House Committee on Health Care, has championed the Hope Amendment for several sessions. This year, he introduced HJR 203 with the support of nearly 40 co-sponsors in the House and Senate.

“I am so proud of the work that has been done over the last three decades to get Oregon to a place where only five percent of people are uninsured,” Rep. Greenlick said. “Still, there is work to be done. Health care is a fundamental right, and it is my hope that one day, every Oregonian will have the coverage that they have a fundamental right to. I believe the Hope Amendment moves us in the right direction to making that a reality.”

The legislation would ask the voters of Oregon to consider adding a section to the state constitution that would read: “It is the obligation of the state to ensure that every resident of Oregon has access to effective, medically appropriate and affordable health care as a fundamental right.”

The joint resolution reads:

“Whereas there are many components that contribute to good health, including the ability to respond to sickness, disease and injury; and Whereas achieving the goal of living a healthy life is impossible without the ability to access health care; and Whereas health care should be available to everyone; and Whereas the lack of available health care is a barrier to opportunity, success and quality of life; and Whereas Oregonians should not be divided between those who can afford to be healthy and those who cannot; and Whereas Oregonians should not be divided between those who have hopes and dreams and those whose sickness, disease or injury robs them of their hopes and dreams...”

Rep. Susan McLain (D-Forest Grove) said the same rights the Oregon Legislature ensured for children, we should aspire to for every Oregonian.

“With Cover All Kids, we decided that health care is a basic right for kids,” Rep. McLain said. “We should not turn our backs on Oregonians once they become adults. If we want our state to

keep moving forward, we must make sure that everyone has access to quality, affordable health care that they deserve.”

Rep. Mark Meek (D-Gladstone), echoed his support for the HOPE Amendment, adding he thought this was an important issue for voters to have a say on.

“I believe that Oregonians should have a fundamental right to quality, affordable health care – and hope for a day where every Oregonian has health coverage,” Rep. Meek said. I also think that the people of this state get to have an opportunity to weigh in on this critical issue. Health care impacts our lives and families in the most personal way.”

In addition to Rep. Greenlick, Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), Sen. Lee Beyer (D-Springfield), and Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D-Beaverton) are chief sponsors on the legislation.

The House Joint Resolution, which passed 35 to 25, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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