**How to Submit Position Letter**

**Create an account with** [**California Advocates**](https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/)**:** The California Legislature will only accept letters received through an online portal system called California Advocates.

* Create an account [here](https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/), if you do not already have one.
* Follow the prompts and fill out the necessary information to set up your account.
* Once you've set up your account, please follow the steps below to begin the letter submission process.

**Create a letter of support:** There is a sample letter on the next page for your reference. Please place the content of the sample letter on your own organizational **letterhead**, include a **signature**, and **tailor** as desired to reflect the perspective of your organization and/or why this bill is necessary. Personal stories are important!

**Submit a letter of support:** Once signed into the portal:

* Select the “Submit a Letter” (top left corner).
* Enter the bill number (AB 1312) and session type (Regular). Select “Search.”
* Ensure that the proper bill has populated and select “Next.”
* On the “Submit Letter as” page, either select or enter your organization.
* Ensure that **the Assembly Health Committee** is selected. This will ensure that the appropriate legislative staffer will receive a copy of your letter. Select “Next.”
* Upload your letter, select “Support” under “Stance,” and enter a subject line.
* You will be prompted to a final “Review Your Submission” page where you can make sure the information you entered is accurate.
* Once you've done so, select “Submit.”
* Lastly, make sure to send a copy of your letter to [Jcardenas@cpehn.org](mailto:Jcardenas@cpehn.org).

**You're done!**

[Organization Logo]

[Date of Submission]

Assemblymember Mia Bonta

Chair, Assembly Health Committee

1020 N Street, Room 390

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1312 (Schiavo) – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Mia Bonta,

[INSERT ORGANIZATION’S NAME] writes to express our support for Assembly Bill 1312 (Schiavo), which requires all hospitals to prescreen patients for eligibility for financial assistance, sometimes known as charity care, prior to discharging the patient.

[INSERT SENTENCE OR SHORT PARAGRAPH ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION]

Rising health care costs are threatening patients’ access to care. California has some of the highest costs in the country for inpatient hospital care, forcing patients to skip or delay care when they need it the most – making health conditions worse. In 2023, over one million Californians were unable to pay for basic necessities due to medical debt.[[1]](#footnote-1) Financial assistance or charity care at a hospital is supposed to ease these financial burdens, but patients continue to face barriers in receiving aid. So, a visit to a hospital emergency room that would be covered by charity care can result in thousands of dollars in medical bills, driving more families into medical debt.

More than one in three Californians reported medical debt in 2023. More than half of Californians who are Black, speak Spanish, or have low incomes (under 200% Federal Poverty Level) – and nearly half of Latine Californians – reported medical debt. One-third of Californians with medical debt owe more than $2,500.[[2]](#footnote-2) A national survey by the Urban Institute found that nearly 73% of adults with past-due medical debt owed some or all of it to hospitals.[[3]](#footnote-3) Every patient that comes into a hospital should know by the time they leave whether or not they qualify for charity care. Setting clear prescreening standards in California will prevent patients from slipping through the cracks.

California must be a leader in establishing pre-screening and providing eligible patients with charity care without extra hassles and red tape. Some hospitals in California, and nationwide, have already implemented pre-screening to streamline billing processes. AB 1312 captures these best practices, and will ensure eligible patients receive financial assistance entitled to them by law. This will prevent patients and their families from falling into medical debt.

For these reasons, we ask that you support AB 1312 (Schiavo).

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[ORGANIZATION]

cc: Assembly Health Committee, Members, and Staff

Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, Author

1. 2023 California Health Interview Survey, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024CHCFCAHealthPolicySurvey.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/most-adults-past-due-medical-debt-owe-money-hospitals> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)