

In the City Council, August 17th, in the Year Two Thousand and Seventeen

Upon the recommendation of Councilor Alisa F. Klein, Councilor William H. Dwight, and Councilor Maureen T. Carney

R-17.372

A Resolution

In Support of Bill S. 619 - An Act Establishing Medicare for All in Massachusetts

WHEREAS, access to affordable, quality health care is a human right and a fundamental component of a decent and just society; and

WHEREAS, the United States remains one of the few countries in the world¹ that does not fully support that right by offering universal, publicly-funded health care to its residents; and

WHEREAS, the rapidly rising costs of health coverage^{2 3} and the shifting of health care costs to the insured in the form of co-pays, deductibles, and co-insurance force many Massachusetts residents to defer care⁴ for conditions that benefit from early diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts families face a high burden of health care costs relative to their income⁵; and

WHEREAS, the rising prices of prescription medications⁶ forces many to choose between filling their prescriptions and making ends meet; and

WHEREAS, the City of Northampton projects a cost of more than \$11 million for employee and retiree health insurance for FY 2018, representing 12.6% of the city's \$93 million budget, and projects those costs to rise 4% annually for the next three years, increasing the tax burden on local taxpayers⁷; and

WHEREAS, the continued rise in costs of employer-paid health insurance negatively affects our local economy by forcing businesses and municipalities to reduce staffing levels, defer raises, and hire part-time workers;⁸ and

WHEREAS, health care providers must navigate a complex insurance landscape and in doing so divert substantial time and resources away from patient care; and

¹ <http://www.nasdaq.com/article/all-the-countries-that-have-universal-healthcare-cm757323>

² <https://www.boston.com/culture/health/2014/03/26/cost-of-health-care-a-burden-for-mass-residents>

³ https://bluecrossmafoundation.org/sites/default/files/download/publication/MHRS%20Beyond_Coverage.pdf

⁴ <http://www.wbur.org/commonhealth/2015/12/15/health-care-costs-impact>

⁵ *ibid*, p14

⁶ <http://www.mass.gov/anf/employee-insurance-and-retirement-benefits/manage-your-health/prescription-drugs/skyrocketing-prescription-drug-costs.html>

⁷ <http://www.northamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8457>

⁸ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2013/09/01/massachusetts-companies-weigh-trimming-employee-benefits-response-federal-health-law/wzQ0euAB9x8tpTORgtL5NO/story.html>

WHEREAS, corporate profit should have no place in keeping our communities healthy or caring for the sick; and

WHEREAS, the current health care system results in 31% of every health care dollar going to paperwork, CEO salaries, and profits, while Medicare covers 55 million residents and operates with just 3% overhead; and

WHEREAS, an alternative Medicare for All system that provides quality, affordable health care for all would remedy the unfairness, unevenness, and disparity of the current health care system and advance the three goals of a rational system: increasing access, improving quality and containing costs; and

WHEREAS, Medicare for All, or “single-payer” health care, is a system that would guarantee medical care, dental care, and eye care for all Massachusetts residents, regardless of income or employment, by simplifying the way we pay for health care, centralizing health care financing and cost control in a single public or quasi-public agency while keeping the delivery of care in private hands;

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts legislature is currently considering “An Act Establishing Improved Medicare for all in Massachusetts”⁹ (House Bill 2987 and Senate Bill 619), that is being co-sponsored by 55 members of the House and Senate, including Representative Peter V. Kocot, and if enacted, would save the City of Northampton millions of dollars in annual employee health insurance expenditures and eliminate the need to contribute to city retirees’ health insurance; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts has always been a leader and innovator in providing coverage for quality health care for its people.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Northampton, Massachusetts, remains committed to providing high quality health care to city employees and retirees, and to making such health care available to all residents of Massachusetts.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we support the “Improved Medicare for All” bill currently in the Massachusetts legislature.

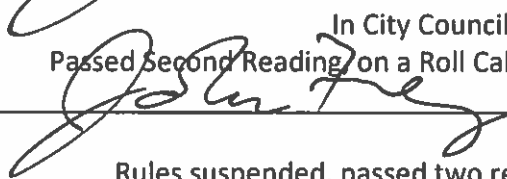
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we commend and support State Representative Peter V. Kocot for being one of the petitioners of HB 2987.

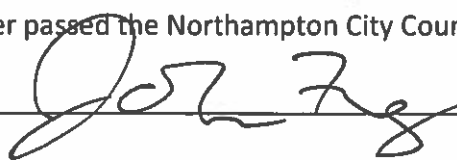
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall cause a copy of this resolution to be sent to MA Governor Charles Baker; State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg; MA Senate President Stanley C. Rosenberg; MA Speaker of the House Robert A. DeLeo; the original sponsors of

⁹ <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/H2987>

S.619 and HB 2987, MA Senator James B. Eldridge and MA State Representative Denise C. Garlick; the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, MA Senator James T. Welch and MA State Representative Peter V. Kocot; U.S. Representative Jim McGovern; U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren; U.S. Senator Ed Markey; and Northampton Mayor David J. Narkewicz.

In City Council, August 17, 2017
Passed First Reading, on a Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No
Attest: , Clerk of Council

In City Council, September 7, 2017
Passed Second Reading, on a Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No
Attest: , Clerk of Council
Rules suspended, passed two readings and enrolled

I hereby certify that the above Order passed the Northampton City Council on September 7, 2017
Attest: , Clerk of Council