

Dear Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee

The American Heart Association (AHA) is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke, whose mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are writing in opposition of LD#1628.

This bill exempts health plans offered for sale by a "nonprofit agricultural membership organization" from state laws that regulate health insurance coverage. These plans are often referred to as "farm bureau plans" and allowing their proliferation has the potential to weaken the overall effectiveness of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) by exposing consumers, particularly those with pre-existing conditions, to significant financial risk, segmenting the individual market risk pool and unnecessarily inflating insurance premiums for people who rely on comprehensive coverage provided through the ACA marketplaces.

As with other under- and unregulated arrangements, like short-term limited duration health plans, association health plans, and allowing for the sale of insurance across state lines, enrollees in Farm Bureau plans risk financial hardship and difficulties accessing needed care. Healthier individuals are likely the only ones that will make it through the medical underwriting process and enroll, leaving older, sicker individuals in the more comprehensive plans, driving up the cost of those plans.

We ask you to vote "ought not to pass" on LD#1628. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this testimony.

Sincerely  
Allyson Perron Drag  
American Heart Association/ Stroke Association  
Government Relations Director