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Republicans Defeat Bill to Provide Health Coverage to Poor Virginians

Richmond, VA -- Today, House Republicans defeated on a party-line vote HB 2212, the "Virginia Healthy Transitions Program." The "Virginia Healthy Transitions Program" would draw federal dollars to provide health coverage to 400,000 Virginians. Since January 2014, Virginia has forfeited over \$1.7 billion in reimbursement that could have been used to pay for health care.

Delegate Patrick A. Hope (D-Arlington), sponsor of the legislation said, "We are here today because hundreds of thousands of Virginians are just one accident or illness away from bankruptcy. I will not sit by and do nothing when we know expanding coverage and access will help these Virginians live healthier lives without fear of financial ruin."

The Virginia Healthy Transitions Program would require Virginia to apply for a federal waiver, seeking similar modifications granted to conservative governors in other states such as Indiana, Arkansas, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. It imposes new costs on poor adults, creates incentives for work, and requires individuals take personal responsibility for their own health.

Delegate Hope said, "This is not Medicaid expansion or 'free' health care. We're creating our own program and using Virginia taxpayer dollars to drive poor Virginians into the private insurance market."

It is estimated that HB 2212 would save the state budget over \$200 million a year in General Funds that currently go toward indigent care, mental health services, and care for prisoners.

Hope concluded, "Health care is not a partisan issue. As long as there are uninsured and the resources to do it, this issue is not going away."

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Paid for and Authorized by the House Democratic Caucus

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