



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



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March 18, 2016

The Honorable Brian S. Dempsey  
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means  
Room 243, State House  
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Support for Bill S. 2138– An Act to protect access to confidential healthcare

Dear Chairman Dempsey,

As members of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission, we write to demonstrate our support for Bill S. 2138– An Act to protect access to confidential healthcare. We are residents of the city of Cambridge, appointed to represent those living, working, or traveling within its borders. We investigate complaints of discrimination related to housing, employment, education and public accommodations. We also educate the community about its rights and advocate on their behalf. In this capacity, we write to you now to express our support for Bill S. 2138.

Health insurers routinely send out an Explanation of Benefits (EOB), detailing the type and cost of medical services received, to the primary subscriber each time an enrollee on the plan accesses care. Sensitive health information is frequently disclosed in an EOB, violating the basic right to privacy for anyone enrolled as a dependent on another's health plan, such as a young adult, minor, or spouse. Victims of abuse and minors are often reluctant to seek certain types of treatment, fearing that their abuser or parent will learn details.

S. 2138 would remove a crucial barrier to accessing health care by ensuring that when multiple people are on the same insurance plan, confidential health care information is not shared with anyone other than the patient. Patients would feel safe getting the tests and medical care that they need. And that is their right.

We respectfully urge you and the entire House to work for passage of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Chanta Bhan  
Chair

Harry Reyes Nieva  
Vice Chair

Signed on behalf of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission

Cc: The Honorable Karen E. Spilka, Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Commissioners Nadia Davila, Nicholas Leydon, Bonita Cox, Robert Slate