

**HB 1385, PAYMENT FOR AMBULANCE SERVICES. (BARRETT, B)
Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions committee, February 14, 2024**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I'm Natalie Robinson, Indiana State Director for the National Federation of Independent Business. NFIB is the nation's leading small business advocacy organization with more than 11k members in Indiana.

While we sympathize with the financial struggles that EMTs are experiencing, we respectfully oppose HB 1385 due to the increased cost it would shift to small businesses. We need to reduce health care costs, not raise them.

This legislation will disproportionately impact small employers as the rate increase only impacts fully insured plans. This bill harms small businesses and does not solve the problem of ambulance funding.

Mandating costs for ambulance services that is 500% above the Medicare reimbursement rate will mean increased health insurance premium costs for small business owners, which will then be passed along to their employees and customers.

Half of small employers (46%) report raising their prices to keep up with rising health insurance costs. Moreover, almost half of small employers now earn less due to health insurance premium increases over the last five years.

As commercial payers, small businesses are already bearing the brunt of subsidizing low Medicare rates. This bill would inflate that financial burden for small employers at a time when they're already facing record-high inflation, not to mention labor shortages.

As small businesses continue to struggle finding qualified workers, it is critical that they can compete with larger firms in attracting and retaining talent by offering health care coverage. Soaring health care costs make remaining competitive difficult for small employers and this legislation will exacerbate the problem.

NFIB remains committed to partnering with the legislature to ensure that small businesses and their employees can access affordable health insurance coverage. As such, I urge committee members to look at the long-term ramifications of continued cost increases on Indiana's small business community.