

My name is Tabatha Holley. I am the pastor of New Day Church in the Northwest Bronx and I am testifying in favor of the New York Health Act. I pastor in the unhealthiest county in the state of New York. It is my hope that you have been compelled by the stories and the testimonies of the people, however, if they have not compelled you I urge you to consider words from sacred text. As a clergy person, it is my duty to provide spiritual care for my congregation and the communities where they live, work, and play. I don't know about your inner life but I urge you to consider how difficult it is to care for the inner spiritual lives of people whose bodies ache with pain because they cannot afford medical treatment. I utter the sacred words of the prophet Jeremiah asking questions "Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?" Jeremiah's questions at this time were rhetorical questions. I ask the same rhetorical question because as a faith leader, I know that Saved souls in ailing bodies is a dilemma, "*is there no balm in Gilead?* Indeed, as there were salves and medicines in the land of Egypt, there is medical care today, for those who can afford it. In a land that is abundant with resources, in a land where there is an abundance of medicine and medical care, it would be a crying shame if we continued to allow some folks to die when we have the resources that they need to live....

Jeremiah 8: 22 reads "Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?" I urge you to remember that as you deliberate you are holding these balms in your hands and I encourage you to extend them to the least of these. I urge you to pass the New York Health Act. Thank you.