

Hello,

I am a Portland resident, writing to provide testimony to the Joint Task Force on Universal Healthcare.

This issue is very important to me, and has been for a long time. When I was 11 years old, I was diagnosed with a clostridium difficile infection that took many long and painful months to resolve. Because my family did not have health insurance, my parents needed to borrow money from family and friends to pay the thousands of dollars required for diagnostics, recovery, and medicine.

Had my family not been able to borrow that money, I likely would not be here today. Not everybody is lucky enough to have family members and friends who can cover unexpected medical costs, and this kind of privilege and access should never--NEVER--be the difference between life and death.

Now, 25 years later, health coverage is STILL an ongoing challenge. As a freelancer and small business owner, I have struggled to navigate complex and fast-changing guidelines to make sure that my family and I have coverage. Even from a place of relative privilege and affluence, I **still** have to worry that a single medical emergency could be ruinous for my family.

The Affordable Care Act made it possible for me to get coverage--but it did NOT solve the problem of healthcare access and justice in a sustainable way. Now, with the ACA increasingly under attack, **it is more important than ever that the State of Oregon commit fearlessly and unequivocally to healthcare justice for all.**

Not only would I be willing to pay more taxes for this -- I would LOVE to pay more taxes for this. I would sleep better every night knowing not only that I would be safe from financial calamity in the event of a health emergency, but that my neighbors, friends, and community members would be safe as well.

I am happy to provide additional testimony and/or to discuss this with the task force at any time. I am so grateful that this group has been convened to look at such a critical issue.

Thank you,
Matthew LeMay
Portland, OR