

Hello Senator James I. Manning Jr., Representative Julie Fahey and company,

My name is Tina Cantú and I remember as a young child being told to call 911 if I am in trouble or hurt. I also remember as an older pre-teen the shock when my mother told me not to call 911 when she cut her finger off with a kitchen knife. I didn't understand even as she screamed out that the ambulance would be too expensive because we had insurance. I thought it was taken care of as I didn't understand deductibles and all the other prerequisites that insurance companies make you meet. I didn't understand what she meant for a long time, but since my 20s, I've seen the truth of it.

Until I was about 22, I didn't need to worry about having insurance as I was considered dependent and able to be on my parents' insurance plan. As someone who was diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis when I was 10, I knew it was extremely important for me to eventually obtain my own someday. While not a perfect system, without the enactment of Obamacare, I would've been completely uncovered and without all the medications I need to maintain my health and not be in constant pain from inflammation and joint damage.

I am lucky to be where I am now with the job I have. They provide me great insurance for what I need when it comes to medication. However, I'm better versed in how insurance works being in my mid-30s. Depending on the type of plan you get and what the focus is (medication, treatment, hospitalizations...etc.), you may or may not qualify for certain things if a deductible is not met and some of these amounts are extremely high even for someone making just over \$15/hour. My deductible is around \$2,000 for hospitalizations, but I've heard some are as high as \$5,000 before any insurance kicks in. How is that even helpful?

Now imagine the cost without insurance at all. This is what gets me. No one asks to be sick or hurt and no one in the US should pay ridiculous amounts just to get help. This is especially true for the state of mental health in this country. I may be fine now compared to 10 years ago, but I know many family members, friends and my fellow man in general who are not fine. They don't have healthcare for many reasons – they either don't make enough to afford anything that will be covered because they can't meet the deductible, or whatever coverage they have is overpriced and has so many loopholes they may as well not have it. Medications are ridiculously expensive, including something as important as insulin for people with diabetes.

I am tired of seeing and hearing about people dying from something that could be fixed by our own government. If only they'd stand up to big pharmacy corporations and actually regulate them! Yes, it's not secret that private insurance can be provided by employers, but not all of them do even if they can afford to. That is not constitutional as people's right to keep themselves healthy should be above profit.

I want universal healthcare for Oregon and eventually, all of the USA. I am TIRED of watching people suffer because corporations and our government would rather care about money than lives. We know there's more than one working model of this that works and the states within our country are no different than the small countries of the UK and all of Europe that have made it work even if it means higher taxes. At least those taxes are actually being put to good use. We can do it and WE SHOULD. Healthcare is and always should be a HUMAN RIGHT!

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Tina Cantu, Consumer Loan Processor I
Northwest Community Credit Union
Consumer Loan center

(800) 452-9515, ext. 2527

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