

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Megan Axtell and I am a patient of a Naturopathic Physician. I am also a Registered Nurse, and an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.

I am very passionate not only about my overall health and wellness, but that of my family and my community. I am also very passionate about medical freedom and the right for each individual to choose their own health journey as well as their own health care provider regardless of credentials.

I would like to share my experience working with an ND to show the importance and value of this profession in the state of Oregon.

Since my late teen years I have struggled with chronic and close to debilitating joint pain and fatigue. As a child I was in and out of doctors and specialists offices for nearly 20 years, and never got anywhere. It was always the same story. "You're young, there is nothing wrong with you". "You look fine". "It's in your head". "Your labs are normal". I was placed on multiple prescriptions as a bandaid, which led to more medical problems, and more prescriptions in the end. The costs of these visits and prescriptions that insurance companies covered were astronomical. It was a complete waste of resources and insurance money.

It wasn't until later in my 30's that I realized I can get help, it was just a matter of finding the right person to guide me along the way.

The moment I first met with a Naturopathic Doctor, I could not believe what special care and concern they had for me. I was no longer a number, but a person that was cared about. For the first time in my life I felt supported and that I was not alone in this journey. I felt that no matter what, they would find answers, and help me to feel better. I am not alone, when I say this. I hear the same story from multiple co-workers, acquaintances, and patients that have seen ND's as well. The 2 people I look up to the most, are my Naturopathic Doctor, and my Chiropractor, because they are invested in helping ME.

The health care system in the US has it all wrong. They are focused on treating symptoms with medications, making people more sick. In reality we should be putting money into resources supporting infants from birth and on up. Focusing on wellness, with healthy food choices, importance of exercise and stress management. Offering resources and funding for chiropractic care, dieticians, massage therapy, meditation, acupuncture, to name just a few. Naturopathic doctors are the best hands down. Personally I feel each and every child, teen, and adult could greatly benefit from the expertise of a Naturopathic Physician. They are very supportive in assisting a person's individual needs and desires to achieve optimal health, and for that they should be paid far more than

the average Medical Doctor. There would be much less chronic health conditions and death, not to mention lower costs to insurance companies if they would just honor the choice of the individual and pay in full for ND's.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Megan A. Axtell, RN, IBCLC