

Rebecca Buck

To: Theresa Utton
Subject: RE: S.53

From: Catherine Rader [<mailto:catherine.rader@myfairpoint.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2018 8:54 AM
To: Theresa Utton
Subject: S.53

Please enter the following into the record:

Dear members of the Vermont Senate Committee on Appropriations:

On January 23 I attended the public hearing of the joint House Health Care Committee and Senate Health and Welfare Committee at the State House. I heard stories from people with and without insurance, for those with inadequate insurance, people trapped in jobs in order to afford insurance for their families. Dr. Allan Ramsay, head of the People's Health and Wellness Clinic in Barre, spoke of ever greater demand on their services for the uninsured and underinsured. We learned that delaying a visit to a primary care physician for lack of a co-pay can lead to more serious illness and even death.

This hearing was in consideration of H.248 and S.53, companion bills proposing publicly funded primary care for all Vermonters. The League of Women Voters (LWV) strongly supports these bills.

Most health care is primary care. Accessible, publicly funded health care will save money. When patients do not delay a doctor visit because of cost, more complex and expensive care is avoided. Include mental health care and substance abuse counseling with primary care, and even more problems are prevented. Publicly funded primary care is an investment in public health.

It could be an investment in economic health as well. Most young people and young families use mostly primary care, and many young people are underinsured, according to testimony at the January hearing. Would Vermont not be a more attractive place to settle if, in addition to its natural beauty, the state offered the security of primary health care to a family just starting out, the kind of health care they were most likely to need? Governor Scott wants more young people to come to and stay in Vermont; Universal Primary Care could be one more tool in his kit.

H.248 and S.53 do not request funds at this time. Rather, the legislation asks that the Joint Fiscal Office present funding options for consideration. Please contact your legislators and ask them to support Universal Primary Care. Let the Joint Fiscal Office provide a way to make this basic human need a reality for Vermonters in these uncertain times.

Don't let this important legislation die. Vote it out of your committee affirmatively in time for the Appropriations Committee and Senate to pass it to the House for action during this session.

The League studies issues and deliberates the pros and cons before reaching a consensus on advocacy. The LWVUS used this process to adopt a position in favor of a national single payer health care system more than 20 years ago.

While continuing to pursue that goal, the League recognized that the individual states can provide models for the nation. In Vermont the League conducted its own study, adopted in 2005. That position is the basis for the League's strong support for H.248/S.53. Our position can be seen at <https://my.lwv.org/vermont/position/health-care>.

Catherine Rader
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