

My name is Eliza Hale. I am a 33 year-old pregnant woman, from Washington Vermont.

I've been unlucky in that I have struggled with chronic health issues my whole life. But I have been lucky in that I was born in to a family with wealth, and I've always had access to health care – and when things were not covered, and I had to pay out of pocket, I was able to pay.

I've heard a lot of people at the public hearing tonight talk about how much health care costs, and I know just how much it costs, from reading my insurance statements.

I've also heard a lot from legislators, like yourselves, about how much health care costs – and that “we can't afford it.”

But in February of 2015, the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, together with the Vermont Workers' Center, published a concrete health care financing plan that showed how Universal health care could be implemented in Vermont in 2017. It added to Governor Shumlin's proposal published in December of 2014, by providing equitable solutions to the questions raised in his report. The plan includes cost and revenue models that demonstrate that it is **not only possible** but, **financially and economically advantageous** to implement a **publicly financed** health care system in Vermont.

One of the equitable solutions to that proposal is a progressive tax on our wealthiest residents – people like my parents – people like me.

We are asking you, the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, to lead the nation by reducing costs while dramatically simplifying and improving the State's current health care system. Universal Primary Care *will not* get us there. By fully implementing Act 48 – the state's law – you will be sending a message to the country and the state – the very people you represent – that you care about them, and that you are not willing to kick the can down the road.