

From: Patricia Reid [mailto:patricianreid@outlook.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 9:45 AM

To: Loring Starr

Subject: Written Testimonial to the House Health Care Committee and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony to the House Health Care Committee and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare. I also submitted a paper copy of this document to the committee yesterday evening.

I am heartened by the testimonies that we heard yesterday and have hope that your committee will choose to move these bills forward in the interest of every Vermonter. Health insurance can only be accessible by all if it is applied universally - you heard many stories yesterday, including mine, that demonstrate how our patchwork system allows people to fall through the cracks.

I know you have many logistical details and financial plans to make regarding these bills, and want you to know that I am grateful to each of you for your service to our community. Your work matters. As the UVMHC medical professional said yesterday, you control the EKG monitors.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or comments about my testimony.

Best,

Patricia Reid

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[WRITTEN TESTIMONY BELOW]

January 23, 2018

Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee in support of Universal Primary Care and bills S53 and H248. My name is Patricia Reid, and as a resident of Addison, Vermont, I am a newcomer to this wonderful Vermont community. There are some people at this hearing who have welcomed me to the Green Mountain State as coworkers and friends. I am here to implore you, Members of the Committee, to welcome me as legislators.

I think I am an example of the kind of person you want to attract to this state – I am educated, employed, and involved in this community. I came to Vermont for the first time in May 2016 to pursue an internship with the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. I returned in May 2017 as a full-time staff member tasked with the care and conservation of the archaeological, historic, social, and ecological collections in its care. I am proud to be a stewardess of the cultural heritage of this state, and know many Vermonters consider my work essential to maintain the spirit of our community.

Since arriving in Vermont, I have become involved in several other ways. I help run a non-profit cooperative art gallery in Vergennes, Creative Space Gallery, which supports art education for youth and adults in Addison County and provides a venue for Vermont artists to show their work and practice their craft with like-minded people. I volunteer with the Bixby Memorial Library in Vergennes, where I have found a wonderful group of kind, generous people who enjoy learning as much as I do. I help to manage productions through the Poor Lost Circus Performers, a new theater company in Middlebury, where I work with both kids and adults who pay nothing to experience the thrill of performing. Additionally, I consider my political activism an important part of my life, and am grateful for the many opportunities this state offers its constituents to raise their voices.

If you get the impression that I'm a busy woman, you'd be right. Not all of these endeavors pay me (in fact, most of them don't), but all of them offer communities of people who help me make ends meet. Like many young people, I struggle financially after completing my undergraduate education and starting an entry-level job that doesn't offer the benefits some mid-career employees enjoy. Still, Vermont is a special place. From the small business owner who replaced my holed shoes to the coworker who opened her home when I had nowhere else to go, Vermonters have consistently shown themselves to be a community which values the wellbeing of many over the profit of few. If this weren't the case, I wouldn't be able to finance my life here – and I would likely have trouble making it elsewhere in the United States, too.

Our health care system should reflect the same standard of collaborative community that the rest of Vermont life so successfully endorses. I have a community of people who help to ensure I am fed, warm, and clothed. This community knows I am also in need of medical care – yet under our current system, there is nothing they or I can do to fix these rather simple medical problems.

I am one of the 63% of Vermonters aged 18-24 who are underinsured. Underinsured means, essentially, that although I currently carry private health insurance, I do not access care when I need it due to financial barriers. Those financial barriers are so high for me that I am unable to pay my premiums. Beginning February 1, I will be uninsured for the rest of this calendar year. If I am sick or