

January 23, 2017

My name is Lesley Jacobson and I live in Bennington. I am a member of Rights and Democracy. I have lived in Vermont for forty years, but this is my very first time inside the Statehouse.

I came here today because I believe our healthcare system is in crisis. Prices are out of control, insurance companies are a nightmare to deal with for patients and doctors alike, and, not ALL Vermonters have access to, or are able to afford the care they need.

I am a retired teacher; I have been fortunate to have good healthcare coverage. I am healthy because of the good care available to me.

But, unfortunately, this is NOT true for ALL Vermonters. Just the other day, a friend of mine in Bennington was in line at the pharmacy. The person in front of her needed to have a prescription filled. When he was told the cost of that medication, he left it on the counter; he was unable to afford it. Was that a life saving cancer drug? I don't know, but even if it was for a seemingly small problem, like a cut that had become infected, or an abscessed tooth, NOT taking that medication may have lead to major, costly complications.

There are numerous stories to be told of personal hardship stemming from this healthcare crisis, but time is short this evening. So instead of relating additional accounts of hardship, I will emphasize what can be done to help alleviate this urgent situation.

We need your support to implement Act 48, the Vermont bill that was passed into law in 2011. It is the bill that would provide necessary medical care for every Vermonter: Universal Care.. It would include treatment for eyes, ears, opioid addiction, mental health and dental care.

With healthier Vermonters, we will have a healthier Vermont; we would ALL benefit- medically, socially, and economically. This is a moral imperative. Do we care for each other, or not? Without our health, NOTHING else matters. And any one of us could face a catastrophic medical condition.

There is a workable financial plan to implement Act 48, and I would be happy to supply this to you upon request..

Historically, Vermont has led the way on so many important societal issues. Help us add Universal Care to this list.

Thank you.

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Public hearing