

February 9, 2021

Dear Members of the House Preventive Health Policy Committee,

In 2003, I was a full-time cosmetology student, working part-time in retail, and I was uninsured. I needed an annual exam and contraception, but when I called the doctor I had seen while I was under my parents' insurance, they wanted \$1000 as a deposit before they'd even see me. My take home pay was about \$800 a month – there was no way that I could afford to put down that much money just for preventative care and birth control.

Luckily, I was able to receive my needed preventive care and birth control through a clinic that served people with low incomes. My story isn't unique – it's a story that many other people share. Working, going to school, just trying to make ends meet. I wanted to be proactive and take care of my health, but I could not afford to do so. Without insurance to help me get the care and contraception I needed, affording it was a struggle. Even for people with insurance – the cost of deductibles and copays adds up quickly. I am now in my late 30s, with three beautiful children: an 8 year old, a 6 year old, and a 2 year old. I am grateful that I have had coverage for my healthcare and for contraception that has given me the freedom to plan for my family, on a timeline that worked best for me and my husband. HF 520 is needed, because the financial barrier is often the last remaining part standing between a person and their healthcare. Passing this bill would ensure that other people like me can obtain the same outcome – reproductive health, and the freedom to plan for their own pregnancies if and when they want them.

Please support HF 520.

Sincerely,

Anita Smithson
Bloomington, MN