



Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii

Senator Gardner
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Senate Bill 53

February 15th, 2017

Dear Senator Gardner,

On behalf of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, I write today to thank you for your leadership and for introducing legislation to expand birth control access in Alaska. As a health care provider that serves thousands of low-income individuals every year, we have long supported sincere efforts to expand access to birth control.

For more than 100 years, Planned Parenthood has provided birth control and other high-quality health care across the nation. In Alaska alone we serve more than 7,700 patients, which includes providing birth control to nearly 3,000 women. We believe that every woman should have full access to the birth control method that works best for her, without barriers based on cost or availability. Senate Bill 53 would remove such barriers and give women more career and education opportunities, encourage healthier pregnancies, and make them less likely to depend on government programs.

Providing a year's supply of birth control at a time is a solution that works for women. For many women who live in rural communities, lack reliable access to transportation, or struggle to balance work and family, a monthly trip to the pharmacy can be an insurmountable barrier to using birth control consistently. Consistent use of birth control is the best way to prevent unintended pregnancy, but one in four women say they have missed pills because they could not get the next pack in time. Getting a full year's supply at one time dramatically improves consistent use. According to a study published in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, dispensing a full year's supply at a time reduces the odds of experience an unintended pregnancy by 30% and is associated with a 46% drop in the chance of needing an abortion. It is also cost effective for both public and private insurance plans, which lower their direct costs on follow-up visits, pregnancy tests, and long-term costs associated with unintended pregnancies.

Women's consistent access to birth control should not depend on her insurance carrier. We appreciate your leadership and hard work to expand birth control access for Alaska women and look forward to supporting your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alyson Currey'.

Alyson Currey
Legislative Liaison

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