



The League of Women Voters

A Voice For Citizens, A Force For Change

P.O. Box 101345, Anchorage, AK 99510-1345

March 9, 2017

Dear Senator Gardner:

The League of Women Voters of Alaska strongly supports SB 53, a bill related to insurance coverage for contraceptives and other services that reduce the risk of unintended pregnancies. At the national level, the League of Women Voters of the United States supports primary care for all, care that includes "prenatal and reproductive health." When women have the consistent ability to plan their pregnancies, their families benefit through greater financial well-being, healthier living conditions, healthier children, greater opportunities, and a myriad of additional benefits.

While improving the quality of life for families, the ability to avoid unintended pregnancies also reduces costs for state and federal governments. In 2010 according to the Guttmacher Institute, the State of Alaska spent nearly \$43 million on health costs related to unintended pregnancies while the federal government added another \$71 million for a total cost of \$114 million. Guttmacher reports that 48% of all pregnancies in Alaska in 2010 were unplanned and 64% of Alaska's unplanned pregnancies were publicly funded, representing the \$43 million cost.

In addition, the cost benefits of supporting women in their efforts to plan their pregnancies goes far beyond the cost of the pregnancy itself. A woman who is able to plan a pregnancy can better guarantee that her health is at optimum level prior to pregnancy, reducing the risk of a difficult pregnancy and trauma to the child. Such planning reduces the possibility of increased health problems for the child, problems which can follow the child for years and require increased health and education costs for the State. A planned pregnancy increases a woman's ability to manage her role as income provider for a family and allows that family the best opportunity to remain as financially independent as possible. Supporting affordable contraceptives prescribed on a 12-month basis will undoubtedly reduce the number of unintended pregnancies in Alaska, thereby increasing family well-being and reducing State costs.

SB 53 can assist women and families to plan pregnancies so they are ready for the added responsibility of a child. It is time to accept birth control as an important and normal part of health care and make that care more easily available. In addition, costs to the State for unintended pregnancies can be reduced. This is a win-win bill that deserves serious consideration by the Legislature. The League fully supports the passage of SB 53.

Sincerely,

League of Women Voters of Alaska, Board of Directors

Pat Redmond, President; Judy Andree, Vice-President; Carol Dickason, Treasurer; Gail Knobf, Secretary; Marianne Mills, Past President; Directors Lois Pillifant, Hetty Barthel, Phyllis Tugman-Alexander, & Diane Mathisen.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.


From: Lou Gagne
To: John Church
Subject: SB 53
Date: Monday, March 13, 2017 10:04:45 AM

Dear Senate HES committee:

I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 53. I hold Life, Family, and Health very dear. I can think of no better single avenue to prevent abortions, support loving families, and provide for healthy women than to make contraception more widely available and covered by insurance (and Medicaid) for 12-month prescriptions, as required under SB 53. Thank you for proposing the bill and holding a public hearing on it. Please pass it out of committee with resounding "Do Pass" recommendations.

Thank you.

LouAnn Gagne'


Douglas, AK 99824

Sent from my iPad