

April 17, 2017

As a female resident of Alaska and as a proud supporter of Planned Parenthood, I'd like to thank you for introducing legislation to support affordable, convenient access to birth control to Alaskan women. In Alaska over 7,700 patients utilize Planned Parenthood and nearly 3,000 women use its services for their birth control needs. HB25/SB53 allows a year's worth of contraceptives to be dispensed at one time, removing access inefficiencies, which translates to more women reaching their educational and career goals, more women going on to have healthier pregnancies in the future, and more families becoming more self-sufficient – **at less cost to government.**

For many women, in both rural and urban areas, lack of reliable transportation, limited clinic and pharmacy hours, and struggles with work/family schedules make multiple trips to the clinic or pharmacy challenging. As a single mom/college student, and later, as a working woman, remembering to get to the clinic for a pill refill or to the pharmacy in time for a refill was yet another priority to juggle. I remember thinking how silly it seemed, in my opinion, to have to make multiple trips for a year's worth of pills. After all, they weren't an addictive medication requiring additional regulatory oversight so I didn't see why the additional trips were necessary. But the trips were required so I went. Once when my car was in the shop, I had to take the bus with my toddler in sub-zero temperatures just for a refill so I wouldn't risk going off them. I shudder to think how much harder it would have been if I didn't hadn't lived in an area with public transportation as an option.

Consistent use of birth control is the best way to prevent unintended pregnancy, yet one in four women say they've missed pills because they couldn't get their next pack in time. We need to help struggling families make family planning as easy and accessible as possible, regardless of where in the state they live.

HB25/SB53 is a "no brainer" if the goal is to reduce unplanned pregnancies and lower the abortion rate. Getting a full year's supply at one time dramatically improves consistent use. According to a study published in Obstetrics & Gynecology, consistent use of birth control reduces unintended pregnancy by 30% and is associated with a 46% drop in the chance of needing an abortion. It's also cost effective for both public and private insurance plans, which lower claims on follow-up visits, pregnancy tests, and long-term costs associated with unintended pregnancies.

Women's consistent access to birth control shouldn't depend on her insurance carrier. We appreciate your efforts to expand birth control access for all of Alaska's women. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anne Green

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