

Good morning. My name is Stephanie Burton, and I live in Kansas City, Missouri. In August of 2008, I left my job as a probation officer to attend law school. I could not afford health coverage, so I was uninsured throughout school. Upon graduating in December of 2010, like many of my classmates, I was unable to find work and was forced to hang my own shingle immediately after passing the bar. Starting my own legal practice meant that I still had no health insurance. As a single mother of four young children, that was devastating. My diabetes went untreated for five years. When my health got so bad that I could not tough it out, I was forced to seek medical care in the emergency room only. As a mother, I felt I had let my children down. I had done everything that seemed right by furthering my education, yet I couldn't even afford a routine doctor's visit. Something was terribly wrong with this picture.

The Affordable Care Act changed all of that. On January 1, 2014, I enrolled in a health insurance plan I purchased through the marketplace for less than \$100 per month, thanks to a subsidy. I no longer had to decide between paying my mortgage and going to the doctor. I have been able to manage my diabetes and get the medications I need to stay healthy for my kids and my clients. It is a huge load off of my mind. I've been covered through marketplace plans since the beginning of the first open enrollment period, and I've found the coverage affordable and easy to use.

When taking a flight, the attendant always says "If you're traveling with small children, in the event of an emergency, first place the oxygen mask over yourself and then over the small child." To every parent, this seems counter-intuitive because we consistently put our children first. However, if we do not take care of ourselves and our health first, we will not be around to care for our children. The Affordable Care Act is like that oxygen mask. It allows me to have health care to keep myself healthy, so I can continue to work and provide for my children.

Until March 7, 2019, I was self-employed without the option of employer provided health insurance. Upon accepting this new position, 8 years after having to hang my own shingle, I am now offered health insurance through my employer. Though the benefit option is great, I can still say the policy that I have through the marketplace is better. I have had the same team of doctors since I enrolled in 2014. Although the need isn't as urgent for me today as it was 8 years ago, I can honestly say the Affordable Care Act saved my life. The last five years of coverage have kept me the healthiest I have been in the last 11 years since I started law school.

One of the requirements for my current employment was to undergo a health physical. I have no doubt that I would not have been healthy enough in 2014 to accept the position I have now. Maintaining preventative health care through routine visits, thanks to my ACA coverage, has allowed me to continue to treat my diabetes without fear of being turned away. Access to healthcare should be a fundamental human right to all people. There should be no Hobson choices when it comes to health care or housing.

During this administration, I have frequently wondered what would happen if I lost my coverage and what it would mean for my children. In the event that I had to return to private practice, would I be able to afford insurance without my subsidy? Would I be lucky enough to last without the treatment I receive? This is not a partisan issue, it is a "what happens to families without health coverage issue". It is a "Why are turning back the hands of time issue?" It is a "why should a single mother of four children

be forced to choose between housing and healthcare issue?” It is a “we create another undue burden on society if we can’t keep parents healthy to live long enough to raise their children issue.” It is a “we are better as a nation if we can keep our people healthy issue.” Please do not take away coverage from 20 million people. Do not return to the health crisis that we endured before the ACA.

Thank you!