

My name is Jamie Mott. I live in Hartford, and I am here to support the State Basic Health Program.

I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area, had a middle class upbringing, went to a good college, and graduated with honors. As a young person, I would've never have pictured myself ending up with a chronic disability. However, towards the end of college I developed a repetitive strain injury in both arms and after 14 years I am still in unrelenting chronic pain.

I am currently not able to use my hands for work because any repetitive motion flares up my chronic injury. Still, I am determined to try to work part-time teaching citizenship classes at the Hartford Public Library with the help of voice activated software.

I am here to represent myself and others who physically cannot work full-time to get health insurance.

For about eight years, I was living at home with my parents just so I could pay for my COBRA insurance and out-of-pocket medical costs that comprised at least 70% of my income. Even then I was working myself sick just to afford my medical needs. I moved to Hartford and quickly acquired massive amounts of medical debt. I was weeks away from bankruptcy. Ultimately I was able to get on disability.

Because of my work-related injury and pre-existing condition I was repeatedly denied insurance coverage. My disability limits me to working part-time which means that I cannot get coverage through a job. Even if I could get coverage there is no way I could afford the high cost of an individual plan. The only health coverage I had been able to get is through the state SAGA program, and to remain eligible for that public program I must work and earn less than about \$560 a month.

There are thousands of people like me who cannot afford insurance but cannot live without it. If the State Basic Health Program is approved, it gives Connecticut residents the freedom to work because we are able to take the jobs that don't offer health insurance. People can work according to their ability and contribute more to our society without fear of losing the health care we need to survive.