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I am writing to express my significant support of LD 718. As a white woman, raised in an upper middle class family of doctors and nurses, I didn't understand how inequitable and inaccessible our healthcare system was. Because of my dad, I was always able to get appointments when I needed them (even if there was a waiting list); I was able to get prescriptions based on his and my mom's diagnosis; if I needed something, or we were concerned about something, chances were I could get it figured out quickly with inside connections to some of Dallas' best doctors.

It wasn't until college, when I was away from my parents' immediate medical networks for the first time in my life, that I began to realize the immense privilege I had having two parents in the medical world and how radically different my experience engaging with the healthcare system was from my friends'. Whether it was limited access to care in rural Pennsylvania, the struggles of trying to navigate appointments and insurance bills as the only fluent English speaker in a first-gen home, or the stress of trying to understand the rules and limitations of medical care access for international students, it became immediately clear to me that our health care system in the US looks and functions very differently depending on who is trying to use it.

When I left/lost my job in December of 2019, the ONLY factor that made me pause and wonder whether I should stick it out at an organization that had treated me with such disrespect, was the fact that I would no longer have health insurance. My access to health care became the number one source of stress for me, and for the first time in my life, I felt the crushing doubt and fear of not being able to access or afford healthcare.

I know that this is just a tiny personal glimpse into the inequity and inaccessibility of our healthcare system, and that my experience with losing insurance through unemployment doesn't even come close to the experiences of immigrants and undocumented individuals trying to find, receive, and afford quality healthcare.

EVERYONE, regardless of their racial or ethnic identity, employment status, financial situation, immigration or documentation status, should be able to go to the doctor, seek treatment, and get access to healthcare support, not only when they need it but also as part of regular, preventative care. And, that care should not bankrupt them.

I support LD 718 because I believe that healthcare is a human right for everyone, not just for people born in this country. Now, more than ever, in the midst of a global pandemic, we must work to make sure EVERYONE has the ability to stay healthy.