



January 24, 2005  
Hearing on SB-203  
Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Safety

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 1

DATE: Jan 24, 2005

BILL NO. SB 203

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,

My name is Alison James, and I am testifying today as a concerned citizen. I am twenty five years old. I currently work for a local non-profit organization here in Helena. My husband, Jason Neiffer, is a Social Studies teacher at Capital High School.

We were married this summer—it's been six months and twenty days! We're young professionals, and we're still establishing ourselves in our relationship as a couple, in our careers, and in our finances. Someday, Jason and I will make great parents—but we both now that right now is not the right time for us to start a family.

For this reason, I take oral contraception. I have health insurance through Blue Cross Blue Shield, which covers many other Montanans. The medication that I take to prevent pregnancy is not covered by my insurance. My husband and I spend about thirty dollars a month on this prescription. For us, this expense is significant. For other families, this expense is impossible.

Women of reproductive age spend 68% more than men on out-of-pocket medical expenses. It's frustrating to know that if I were a man, and I was taking any other medication—even if it wasn't one that had such a tremendous impact on my health, lifestyle and future—that medication would most likely be covered by my insurance. In fact, there are 21 other states that I could live in where my prescription contraception would be covered by insurance.

But we don't want to live in another state—we want to live in Montana, and someday raise our kids here. I feel like Jason and I are trying to make good, responsible choices for ourselves and our future family, and we're being financially penalized for that. As the committee on Public Health, Welfare and Safety, there are few other actions you could take to really benefit the health, welfare and safety of Montana families than to support this bill. Please vote for insurance coverage of contraception. Thank you.