

Clark Sowers

My Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Clark Sowers. I am here to support Senate Bill 22. I am 17 years old and a senior at the Project for Alternative Learning.

I used to get health insurance through my step father, who is a state employee, but lost that coverage six months ago. I am currently living with my biological father, but cannot get on his health insurance. Then I heard about the CHIP program when someone came in our school and talked about it. Then I applied for the program, and have been on it for six months. My dad thinks the program is great because I can have affordable health insurance.

I will be graduating on May 30th of this year. I am enlisted in the delayed entry programs for the US Marines, serving an inactive duty year. I am doing physical training with the other local marine recruits and the recruiters from Helena until I ship out for boot camp in Camp Pendleton on June 18th. At that point I will get health benefits through the military.

I need access to health care because I am a very accident prone person. Like most teenagers I watched Jackass and, of course, didn't heed the "do not attempt this stunt" warnings. Since being on the program I have to have surgery on my foot because of an accident involving a laundry basket and a staircase. I had to have a minor in office surgery. I was expecting to have to pay a lot, but with CHIP, all I had to pay was three dollars. If I had not had CHIP at that point, I would have probably have had to sell my car to pay the bill.