

Testimony on
Medicaid Expansion

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee
My Name is Jim Higgins (sp Higgins) and I'm here representing the
Enlisted and Officer Associations of the Montana National Guard. I'm
also representing the Montana Dept of the Veterans Of Foreign Wars
VFW at the request of Mr. Ed Croucher, Vice Commandant.

I am also a Veteran of 34 years, retiring in 2001 to Libby MT.
My purpose in speaking here today is to support Montana Veterans.

We are told that Medicaid Expansion will provide the opportunity for
medical care to 9000 Montana Veterans.

Several thousand young Montana Guardsmen are veterans based on
Montana code definition of veterans and Medicaid expansion can
provide a 2nd source of care without any age limit. It can serve their
spouses as well if they meet the income limits which are \$15,856 and
\$21,403.

I am deeply concerned about this new generation of veterans. The VA is
getting better but it still can be weeks or months to process claims.
Nationwide, there is a huge backlog and access in rural Montana is
sketchy at best.

Medicaid expansion is good for Montana veterans, young and old,
because it provides a 2nd option, often closer to home. Young veterans
are struggling to find jobs, are often underemployed, or trying to get an
education. At times they need medical help to adjust and bring normalcy
to their life. They have given a lot, now it's time to give back.
Let's pass this bill.

James W Higgins *Bridger (cc)*