

Good afternoon. My name is Anna Marie Tschida, and I am here today because, frankly, SB 395 impacts each and every one of my children.

I am a single mother, and have 3 children. Braxton, Samantha and Collin. Let me help you put a face to each of these names.

Braxton is a 26 year old who has 5 years of college in, taking on more and more debt each year, in order to realize his dream of being an architect. Despite the fact that he earned only \$8,100 last year, he does not qualify for Medicaid because he is a single male, and is too old to be covered under my policy. Due to the fact that his university "healthcare" and I use that term loosely, doesn't cover dental matters, and his dental insurance doesn't cover oral surgery, he has had to incur even more debt because he had a tooth go bad, and couldn't afford to go to the dentist, let alone the oral surgeon. As a result, because the infection in his jaw got so bad, he not only lost the tooth, but also needed to bone-graft his jaw and watch for a brain infection. None of this was covered by insurance. He nearly dropped out of school because he was so sick, and would have incurred a loss in college tuition, as well as medical bills he now has to pay. Had he qualified for Medicaid, he could have addressed his tooth much earlier in the process, and would not have needed his jawbone grafted, nor had to be on massive antibiotics.

Samantha is a 23 year old with cerebral palsy, whose only physical ability is left/right head movement. Her healthcare needs are great, but each year, because of cutbacks, she loses more and more care. Case in point: when she was 21, she was admitted to a nursing home because, you see, when she turned 21, she automatically lost all nursing under the Medicaid program as it now stands. While Samantha has vast physical needs, she is also a normal 21 year old who wanted to live away from her family and be independent. We had to say enough is enough, when the nursing home called me to tell me that she was down to 61 pounds. Yes, 61 pounds. When the system is broken enough that it will pay for a person to live in a nursing home, but not be supported in their own home, despite the fact that a nursing home costs are significantly more, something needs to be fixed.

Collin is a 20 year old who was initially diagnosed with bipolar disorder 5 years ago. Last year, a phenomenal doctor realized that he had a pituitary disorder, whereby his pituitary doesn't release hormones the way it should, and upon further review, also had a tumor. Because of this diagnosis, my son is now receiving the necessary hormone injections, and is completely off of his bipolar medication. He will need to have follow-up MRIs of his brain to monitor the tumor and will need to take his injections for the rest of his life. If he were to lose coverage under my insurance, he would have to incur these costs on his own as well, because like his brother, he is a single male.

My question for you today is this. What is enough? Should a man have to contemplate dropping out of school and lose a part of his jaw because he cannot afford to get care? Should a young woman worry that she will have to eventually live in an environment that almost killed her? Should a young man, just starting his life have to worry that he will not be able to receive the basic necessary hormones that each of us naturally produce? Worry that he will not be able to monitor the tumor in his brain because he does not qualify for medical coverage?

Medicaid benefits are sometimes portrayed and perceived as just one more give-away, but my experience is that whether you are a high-achieving college student, a person with a physical disability, or just a regular run-of-the-mill young adult, affordable healthcare matters. Your vote, matters!

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