

EXHIBIT 10

DATE 4/15/13

SB 395

## Medicaid Expansion SB 395 PROPONENT Testimony

**TO:** Chairman Rep. David Howard, Vice-Chairs Representatives Cary Smith, Carolyn Pease-Lopez, members of House Human Services Committee

**FROM:** Mary Ann Dunwell, Helena resident, Montana citizen 461-5358

**DATE:** 4-15-13

Good afternoon Mr. Chair, members of the committee and staff. I'm Mary Ann Dunwell, Helena resident, Montana citizen - and for full disclosure, a state employee here on my own time, not state time. I would like to be excused after my testimony to get back to work.

Thank you for the chance to speak in favor of SB 395 to expand Medicaid. When I was pregnant with my son 18 years ago, my husband and I had lost our jobs. Our COBRA insurance - that was not cheap - was due to run out before my due date. I developed a serious medical condition called eclampsia. My son and I landed in intensive care and almost died. Thank God we recovered, but we faced huge medical bills. If we had had the benefit of an SB 395 back then, we could have escaped financial hardship.

That was a while ago and not here in Montana. And although I marvel at how we Montanans help one another, no \$15 a plate spaghetti dinner, chili feed or quilt raffle can approach sustainable, affordable, accessible healthcare coverage.

Many Montanans are one crisis away from losing everything. Mounting medical bills can throw anyone of us into bankruptcy. Expanding Medicaid would guard against that. It would help our neighbors who grow our food, work the land and our Main Streets, and raise our families. The 70,000 people this bill would cover are not just numbers. They're somebody's loved one, somebody's neighbor, somebody's friend.

Some legislators are proposing an alternative to this bill – Mr. Chair, members of the committee, it's no SB 395. It passes up this great deal for Montana to find state money somewhere – probably swiping funding from critical human services programs that serve Montanans now. Plus, it would cover far fewer folks.

And while legislators play politics with people's health and Montana's future. Montanans face life's harsh realities. They lose their homes and everything they've worked for because medical bills swallow any savings and put them so deeply into debt. Or they don't go to the doctor because they have to feed their kids or put gas in their car. They get sick when their illness could've been prevented with access to screening and better prevention. For some, their sickness will get so bad that it can't be treated. Jobs - Young people will leave Montana for healthcare jobs in other states that accept federal Medicaid money. Montana healthcare providers will go too for that great deal in another state.

Montanans do not deserve to be pawns in your political game. I beg you to call the game, look at the overwhelming support for Medicaid expansion from all corners, put the health and well-being of Montanans first, and vote in favor of SB 395. Thank you.