

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



ANGELA McLEAN
LT. GOVERNOR

April 29, 2015

The Honorable Linda McCulloch
Secretary of State
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Secretary McCulloch:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto Senate Bill 349 (SB 349), "AN ACT REQUIRING AN ISSUER WHO OFFERS HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE THAT INCLUDES ELECTIVE ABORTION COVERAGE TO ALSO SELL HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE ELECTIVE ABORTION COVERAGE; REQUIRING NOTICE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

As a father, husband, and son, I stand firmly opposed to restrictions on a woman's ability to make deeply personal medical decisions in consultation with her medical provider, family members, and spiritual leaders. As elected officials, we should all be working together to expand access to health care services in Montana. Unfortunately, SB 349 and several other bills proposed this session seek to do just the opposite.

Instead of focusing on solutions that help women and families in Montana, SB 349 attempts to score political and ideological points at the expense of women's health. Currently, insurance policies on the exchange offer a wide range of reproductive and pregnancy-related services, including medically necessary abortions. SB 349 forces insurance companies to offer plans that exclude abortion services except in extraordinary circumstances when the life of the mother is endangered. A women's health care coverage should be comprehensive; in consultation with her doctor, she is legally entitled to make determinations about health risks associated with her pregnancy.

Although SB 349 supporters would like to claim that consumers should have a choice between plans that cover medically necessary abortions and those that do not, the truth is that it is impossible for families to anticipate in advance unforeseen and unexpected events. Under this bill, a woman could be faced with any number of medical emergencies and find herself without the coverage she needs to make the best decision for herself and her family.

Furthermore, SB 349 would create additional administrative burdens and costs for insurance companies, potentially doubling the number of insurance products on the exchange, and ultimately leading to increased costs for consumers.

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Montana's elected officials have no business substituting their personal beliefs for the sound medical judgment of our healthcare professionals or the deeply personal medical decisions of their constituents.

For these reasons, I veto SB 349.

Sincerely,



STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Legislative Services Division
Debby Barrett, President of the Senate
Austin Knudsen, Speaker of the House