

For the majority of my adult life, I have either been uninsured or have carried medical insurance adequate only for avoiding the economic impact of a major medical catastrophe. I count myself lucky that I lived through that time without any events that would have hindered me medically or, as an after effect, financially. To achieve that result, I often avoided the doctor or dealt with “minor” health problems on my own.

It is because of the Affordable Care Act that I currently have the ability to afford care that protects not only against catastrophe, but to actually prevent future medical problems through regular check-ups and doctor interaction. The value of this prevention, as I move further into my adult years, is major. Michigan's expanded Medicaid program under the ACA has improved situations like this across the state.

I have often heard characterizations of those who were added to medical insurance roles after enactment of the ACA as lazy, outside of the workforce, or otherwise somehow undeserving of the “luxury” of medical care. Often, these complaints come from those who have always had medical insurance and, while they are dealing with the reality of increasing insurance costs, have never had to deal with a lack of insurance altogether. Often, these complaints come from those in higher income brackets than my own, who enjoy actual luxuries, such as cable television. While I do not discount the impact of increasing monthly costs on these families, I also expect they do not understand the reality of choosing against care altogether due to finances.

For most of my life I have worked multiple jobs, only once having been provided the benefit of insurance from an employer. Currently, I work a part-time job, in addition to operating my own business pursuits. I am involved in my community through official appointments and volunteer activities. I am not lazy. I am not outside of the workforce. I am a human being, an active member of my community, and I deserve medical care. I count on the ACA to provide me that.

The Affordable Care Act is not a perfect law, but the increased insurance roles and slowing of costs at the very least indicate it should receive more respect than it currently does. It's opponents have had eight years to present a better option or, perhaps more appropriate, work to improve the existing framework. Instead, we have had eight years of blind opposition, of attempted destruction instead of building.

In 2017, we face an uncertain future with the very real threats to repeal the ACA. To repeal the ACA, in full or in part, without proper replacement would be disastrous. I personally find myself in a better position than I was when the ACA was enacted, but I know all too well the threat facing those who struggle financially. It is likely the protection and prevention provided by the ACA has gotten me to where I am and helped me overcome those troubled times.

I am writing to ask that, regardless of your party or previous stance, you work for the American people to better the current healthcare system, not tear it down. Before any type of repeal or removal, a better solution should be in place. Anything less is a disservice to your constituents and will certainly effect this voter's future election contributions and decisions.

I am including copies of recent reports from the New England Journal Of Medicine and the University Of Michigan regarding the positive effects of the ACA assisted Medicaid expansion in my home state of Michigan.

Thank you.