

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
BEFORE THE HOUSE HEALTH & INSURANCE COMMITTEE
ON HB 21-1232: COLORADO HEALTH INSURANCE OPTION**

April 9, 2021

**Sandra J. Payne, Owner
Denver Concrete Vibrator**

Thank you Chairwoman Lontine, Vice Chairwoman Caraveo, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sandra Payne. My husband, Steve, and I have owned Denver Concrete Vibrator, a construction equipment manufacturer located in Denver, for more than 20 years. Thank you for allowing me to share comments on the need to establish a public health insurance option, which would help lower costs in both the individual and small group markets in Colorado and benefit small businesses like mine.

Owning a business has been quite an experience. We have survived 9/11, the Great Recession, and the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing valuable, affordable healthcare to our employees has always been a huge challenge. For many years, I paid exorbitant fees to a Professional Employer Organization (PEO) in order to utilize the insurance buying power. This provided good coverage, but the company share was a huge burden, and the balance of the premiums still was too high for our employees. When the Colorado Exchange opened, we dropped the group coverage. Many of our employees obtained lower-cost coverage and received a tax benefit, but it is far from ideal.

Unfortunately, the Exchange was not as beneficial to my husband and me. We paid large premiums and copays until we became eligible for Medicare, but this is not a solution. Many Coloradans already struggle to pay for housing and food for their families. They should not have to wait for the basic human right of quality, affordable healthcare.

I'd also like to note that it is extremely difficult to find qualified employees without a healthcare offering. I am certain many other businesses are in the same situation. Small businesses, the backbone of American progress, are being squeezed, and rampant insurance premiums and other healthcare costs are a primary reason.

This is why I believe the Colorado Health Insurance Option is a commonsense solution to address the challenges of providing quality healthcare. It is a feasible way for Colorado businesses to provide affordable and accessible health coverage for employees. And it will help your constituents who do not have adequate, or any, health insurance. This plan also will ensure that Coloradans do not lose their healthcare coverage if they change or lose a job. Despite the arguments against a public option, this will lessen the burden on society, the need doesn't stop just because the coverage is not available.

For the sake of creating a pathway to more equitable and affordable healthcare, I urge you to pass HB 21-1232, which will help small businesses support Colorado citizens and once again lead the nation in resolving a widespread problem. Inaction will only cost us much more in the long run.

Sincerely,

Sandra J. Payne