

Sept. 25, 2017

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski
510 L Street
Suite 600
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Sen. Murkowski,

As Alaskans and as women, we were proud to see your decision last July when you stood up for us, for millions across the country and for the more than 7,000 Alaskans who rely on Planned Parenthood for care. You channeled the independent spirit of Alaska and listened to the people who elected you. Your leadership in protecting access to health care in Alaska and demanding a fair and bipartisan process with debate to address the current law was — and remains — critical. As Planned Parenthood patients and supporters, we are grateful.

We would like to ask you to stay strong for Alaskans. The Graham-Cassidy bill will eliminate access to Planned Parenthood, significantly reduce the Medicaid program, and have the greatest negative impact on women and families. Communities across the state do not want to see the already limited health care services even further reduced.

As you know, Alaska cannot afford to lose a single health care provider, and we especially cannot afford to lose the expertise of a provider that specializes in addressing Alaska's most pressing health needs. Twenty out of 29 counties in Alaska do not have an OB/GYN. In 2016, Planned Parenthood delivered contraceptive care to nearly 3,000 Alaska patients — just 300 fewer patients than the state's entire community health system served in 2015.

Yet, according to 2015 statistics, Alaska leads the nation in chlamydia rates, and is eighth in gonorrhea rates. The rate of reported rape is the highest in the country, and 2.5 times the national average.

The numbers are striking. But when you vote on this bill, we hope you will remember the people behind those numbers.

Two of us are survivors of sexual assault who turned to Planned Parenthood for support and ownership of our own bodies. Some of us who live in small towns are looking for the privacy that Planned Parenthood provides. One of us has been going to Planned Parenthood for decades because it was the only affordable health care provider while we were building our family in Alaska. And one of us has three beautiful children because Planned Parenthood was there to quickly diagnose an ovarian tumor, preserving one ovary and the ability to have children.

There are thousands of other Alaskans who could say the same things about Planned Parenthood.

Thank you for voting against a bill that would deeply harm our families and communities. Please stay strong.

Sincerely,

Sarah Stevens, Anchorage

Moira Pyhala, Soldotna

Lorene Lynn, Palmer

Emily Ferry, Juneau