

**Testimony of Wendy Weimerskirch Plager, AFSCME 3800 Member
Board of Regents Public Forum on the University Budget
Wednesday, June 5, 2013**

Hello, my name is Wendy. I enjoy my job serving students in the Health Careers Center. I am also a student, currently using the Regents Scholarship to help fund a Master's degree in Educational Administration so that I can develop effective programs for our students.

I am greatly concerned by how these proposed changes in health benefits will affect my husband and me. This will affect our lives directly and we may not be able to move forward in our schooling. My husband, Phillip, who is also a student at the U of M, is Type 1 diabetic, so the increases in premiums and copays would affect us dramatically. Our lives are affected every day by diabetes. If Phillip is able to afford the daily prescriptions he needs, he can prevent any serious problems from developing, which will save thousands of our health care dollars and allow us to maintain our simple and healthy quality of life.

My income is already stretched thin by paying both of our tuition bills, rent, and insurance. This leaves no buffer for saving or emergencies. Doubling our cost of healthcare would significantly impact our lives. My budget cannot absorb this increase. We have no children yet, and probably will not have any for a while because we cannot afford it. Having a wage based sliding scale for health care premium payments would greatly help our family, and save us from moving backward.

Phillip is working hard towards becoming a doctor who helps treat other diabetics, and I would like to be a professor or a dean at a university. We need our university to respect our family NOW, so that we will be able to progress by getting the healthcare and education we need to achieve our goals for the future. PLEASE do not increase the amount we pay for our healthcare, so that we can keep developing through school and work to lead future generations of University of Minnesota students.

Thank you.