

My name is Campbell Mitchell. I am a Ridgefield resident and a sophomore in Social Sciences at Western Connecticut State University, where last semester I made the Dean's list. Also last semester, I spent more on insulin than I spent on my tuition. This semester will likely be the same, and the semester after that. I have Type 1 Diabetes, which means I will need insulin for as long as I live, and I will have to continue paying whatever price is forced upon me.

I went without insulin unknowingly before my doctors realized my pancreas could no longer produce it, and I nearly died in the process, barely coming out of a coma after days in intensive care. The pain of diabetic Ketoacidosis, in which runaway acid buildup burns the body from the inside out, is incomparable. That was thirteen years ago yesterday. I think it's important to understand that for those who need it, insulin is not just medication, it is life support, in the same manner as artificial oxygen is for those who need it to breathe. When people talk about "rationing insulin", that is a polite euphemism. They are gambling with their lives, because they cannot afford otherwise. I was lucky. I eventually got insulin and survived. Not everyone is so lucky, and our current system stacks the odds.

This was already a crisis before COVID-19. The dislocation brought on by the pandemic has taken us out of the frying pan and into the fire. With so many people losing income and insurance, individuals are struggling to afford their prescriptions, and families are struggling to keep their children alive. Private charities and industry assistance programs are overwhelmed. Amid the backdrop of the pandemic, people are being admitted to hospitals because they can't afford insulin to stay healthy at home, or they can only afford outdated, unreliable substitutes. Each of the policies being considered for this legislation will save the lives of Connecticut residents, not only by giving people like myself who need insulin to survive access, but also by keeping people healthy, relieving pressure on our medical system during this pandemic. In this respect, the more comprehensive we can make this legislation, the more people we can help, and the more lives we can save.