# Sen. Bernie Sanders Calls for Investigation into Birth Control Costs under ACA Mandate



**Sen. Bernie Sanders Seeks Investigation into Birth Control Costs**

**June 26, 2024, Updated 1:17 p.m. ET**Last week, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont urged a federal investigation into why many women are still being charged for contraceptives, despite a mandate under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that should make these services free. Sanders addressed a letter to the Government Accountability Office highlighting that insurance companies continue to charge co-payments or deny birth control coverage altogether, affecting millions of women.

**The ACA Mandate**Since 2012, the ACA has required private insurance plans to cover FDA-approved contraceptive methods and related services without cost-sharing. However, a recent survey by the nonprofit KFF found that 25% of women with private insurance have paid some part of their birth control costs.

**Insurance Challenges**Some insurers have been accused of offering only partial coverage or none at all for certain contraceptives. In 2022, a congressional investigation reported that insurers often deny appeals for necessary contraceptive coverage, complicating access.

**Ongoing Issues**Insurance providers allegedly exploit loopholes or impose "try and fail" policies, forcing women to use less preferred methods before covering their desired contraceptives. The federal government continues to face enforcement challenges, with penalties for non-compliance being relatively minor.

**Broader Context and Consumer Actions**Women who face charges for contraceptives are advised to consult their doctors, contact their insurers, and seek advocacy support from organizations like the National Women’s Law Center. The Department of Labor has recently criticized burdensome insurance practices, urging adherence to ACA mandates.

**Aer Lingus and Pilots Resume Talks Amid Strikes**

**June 26, 2024**Aer Lingus is set for new talks with its pilots on Thursday in an attempt to resolve a pay dispute that has led to 270 flight cancellations, affecting tens of thousands of passengers. The pilots, represented by the Irish Air Line Pilots’ Association (Ialpa), initiated an indefinite work-to-rule and have planned an eight-hour strike on Saturday.

**Dispute Details**The pilots are demanding a 24% pay increase, arguing it aligns with inflation since their last raise in 2019. Aer Lingus has offered a 12.5% increase, contingent on productivity enhancements.

**Government's Stance**Irish Taoiseach Simon Harris has welcomed the renewed discussions but emphasized the need for both parties to negotiate in good faith to minimize disruption. The Labour Court has declined to intervene at this stage but remains available for future consultations.

**Passenger Impact**While passengers continue to face uncertainty, many are preemptively arranging alternative travel plans to mitigate potential last-minute cancellations. Some passengers expressed understanding of the pilots' stance, while others criticize the industrial action for disproportionately impacting travel plans during the peak holiday season.