

January 17, 2026

Dear Health Industry,

I was surprised to learn that I must pay for the privilege of training to volunteer my services, working in the health industry. I am retired. Unless the stock market crashes, I will need a job for very few hours a month. I doubt this will work for your business model. However, my services may still be of use to you as you advocate for change.

The main reason for my nervous breakdown over 30 years ago was that I was trying to "have it all" - career and full-time homemaker work. My biological system, in the form of a nervous breakdown, told me that I would have to choose between my health and my ambition. This was not really a choice. The unspoken choice, however, was between being a "being-there" parent and having financial independence. I don't think anyone, male or female, should be asked to make such a choice. Enough of us want both, if we are able, that society should offer this as a viable option.

In the interest of keeping this letter short, I will recommend my website to you, where you may find information that I hope may soon be discussed at higher socioeconomic levels than it appears to have been so far, as we ALL try to avoid a financial crash. My website is Anniespicsandpoems.com It includes my photos, poems, path out of breakdown (Happiness page), and essays on economic topics, including why you might find it necessary to invite people like me to *pay* for training that serves the community.

A simple example will suffice: After my breakdown, an older friend - whose husband didn't want her to work - invited me to join her in volunteering for the symphony. Within two years, the symphony was asking its volunteers to pay to remain on its mailing list, and I had found a part-time job. I thought that being paid for my time was better than having to pay for the privilege of volunteering. This is the new normal. What people in financially-stable homes used to do (volunteering in the community) is being done less and less, because it is not cost-effective.

Sending society back to that social structure is not going to work, for the long run. We ALL need some other way for necessary volunteer (that is, unpaid) work to be done, without obliging people to give up financial independence and self-reliance.

Best regards,

L. Anne Emerson