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May 4, 2017

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20050

Dear President Trump,

I am writing today to express my deep concern with your administration's efforts to undermine the Affordable Care Act (ACA), or what we Democrats have come to affectionately call "Obamacare." I urge you to promptly rescind all executive orders and actions designed to sabotage the healthcare markets upon which millions of Americans rely for coverage. While the ACA may not be perfect, it is the law of the land. Unfortunately, its vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by your administration's attempts to destabilize key elements of the law. If you do not undo these harmful actions, the responsibility for any failure of our nation's healthcare markets will be yours and yours alone.

While you have repeatedly claimed that Obamacare markets are failing, the facts indicate otherwise. According to the Congressional Budget Office, markets are stable in most areas. However, your administration has taken steps that will undermine the market's stability.

First, you signed an executive order on your first day in office that gave federal agencies the authority to disregard enforcement of the individual mandate. The Internal Revenue Service has since announced that it will accept tax returns that do not show proof of health insurance coverage. As you know, the individual mandate is critical to the stability of the health insurance markets because it ensures a diverse pool of enrollees.

Second, your administration abruptly stopped running advertisements aimed at encouraging young adults to sign up for health insurance during the last days of the open enrollment period. Both of these actions were clear attempts to undermine the Affordable Care Act and will cause fewer young, healthy individuals to sign up for health insurance, create more uncertainty for health insurance companies, and destabilize the market.

Third, during critical negotiations to avoid a government shutdown, your administration recklessly threatened to end cost sharing reduction payments that help



Americans pay for out of pocket healthcare costs. While the White House later promised to continue the payments, Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney said, after an omnibus deal was reached, that the White House has not decided whether these payments will be issued in May.

Though a bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act has now passed the House, it has virtually no chance of passing the Senate in its current form, based on various reported statements from Republican Senators. When this bill inevitably fails to pass the Senate, you will be left with two choices: You can accept that the ACA is here to stay and work with Democrats to improve the law; or you can deliberately undermine the ACA and try to blame Democrats for the consequences. The latter path is immoral and irresponsible because it will cause unspeakable pain to millions of Americans and devastate our economy. The American people are smart enough to understand that you, and you alone, will be responsible.

If you are serious about improving the ACA to lower costs, expand access, and improve health outcomes, you will take immediate steps to reverse your efforts to undermine the law of the land.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Richmond', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Cedric L. Richmond
Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus