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July 14, 2017

Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell,

We write to you today to express our deep concern over both the TrumpCare bill, and the undemocratic process by which you have crafted it. This bill is disastrous for the communities we represent and antithetical to the values we hold dear. We are not alone in our concern. Several Republican Senators have expressed reservations about this and previous versions of the bill. Your fervent quest to ram a proposal – any proposal – through the Senate before the August recess makes it clear that your interest is not a genuine effort to improve access to healthcare, but rather a scheme to eliminate programs that help the most vulnerable Americans – the elderly, the poor, and the sick.

Without question, this bill would devastate the communities we represent. No matter how you amend the bill on the edges, it is still rotten to its core. It would cut hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicaid; increase premium costs to Americans; reduce access to mental health care, maternal care, and life-saving prescription drugs; and make care unaffordable for millions. In fact, for at least 22 million Americans, the passage of TrumpCare is a matter of life and death.


For seniors, any Medicaid cuts in the form of per capita caps will choke off funding for nursing homes and long term care options. For elderly Medicare recipients, the restrictions of TrumpCare would translate into higher insurance premiums. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that almost 20 percent of seniors would be uninsured by 2026. For children, TrumpCare slashes funding for childhood immunizations, decreases access to medical care and preventative benefits, and will harm patients with autism and those who care for them. For people with disabilities, TrumpCare rolls back the Medicaid expansion and will hurt those who rely on the program for in-home care services.

Though it may not be perfect, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been a lifesaver for millions of Americans. The ACA helped 7.8 million African Americans gain access to preventative services without co-pays or deductibles, which helps people live a healthier life. Since its implementation, the excess mortality rate from cancer for African-American men has dropped by more than half. According to the American Cancer Society, this progress is directly linked to the increase in healthcare access brought about by the ACA. Moreover, the Medicaid expansion under ACA helped provide insurance to millions of low-income individuals. African-American participation in Medicaid among childless adults increased by 20 percent in states that expanded the program – more than any other racial group.


Instead of expanding access and driving down the cost of health care, your alternative would hurt all kinds of Americans – the elderly, the sick, the working class, children, women, and people with disabilities. It is no surprise that only 16 percent of Americans – Democrats, Republicans, and Independents – support TrumpCare. Moreover, this bill was drafted without input from a single Democrat, a single woman, or a single person of color. By contrast, the ACA was vetted with robust Congressional scrutiny and a diversity of perspectives. In the House alone, the bill went through 79 bipartisan hearings and markups over two years. The Senate spent 25 consecutive days in session on health reform alone – some of your Members were there to make sure of it.

We can – and we must – do better for the American people. The Congressional Black Caucus is ready and willing to work in a bipartisan fashion to improve the ACA. When you are ready to work together to ensure all Americans have access to quality, affordable health care, we will be here waiting.


Sincerely,



Cedric Richmond
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus



Robin L. Kelly
Co-Chair, Health Task Force



Bobby Rush
Co-Chair, Health Task Force