

Help LWV and Protect Our Care Educate and Advocate for Improved Healthcare, Not Repeal and Replacement with AHCA

Thank you for your efforts thus far contacting Senators and Congressional Members to advocate for reasonable healthcare reforms and to reject both the House and Senate AHCA bills.

The votes on the repeal and replacement has been delayed, so our partners are suggesting organizing Letter to the Editor Writing Parties. Please see the tool kit below to utilize, including sample letters, talking points and links to local papers. Use your local media connections and reach out to likeminded organizations in your area to work together.

Senate President, Mitch McConnell, has just announced that the Senate August recess will be delayed so that maximum attention can be given to repeal and replace.

Please post your letters on your social media pages and web pages and share with us at hdenk@lwvil.org. Please hold your parties within the next 10-14 days.

Follow the links for samples of the five versions of the LTE:

Sample LTE for Service Provider Impacted by Illinois budget impasse

I am a [medical, social services provider] in [your city]. I care for vulnerable populations who need access to health care and social services to live, be productive and integrated into their communities. Many of our clients rely on Medicaid to pay for all or part of their health care and to allow them to remain at home or in their communities with supports. Our [agency, organization, nursing home, hospital] relies on Medicaid and state funding to stay in business and care for those in our community. We are a local provider and also a local employer providing necessary services to our fellow neighbors and employing those in our community bolstering our local and state economies. We have been struggling for almost three years due to the Illinois budget impasse because our payments from the state have been delayed or non-existent and we have not been able to stay fully funded. This means that we have lost revenue, patients and clients, and employees. We are relieved to finally have a state budget that will begin to bring us back from the brink and hopefully make us solvent again. However, around the corner, another storm is looming just as we get back on our feet. If Congress passes the repeal of the Affordable Care Act with its proposed devastating cuts to the Medicaid program, Illinois will be hit with tens of billions of dollars in lost federal funding that will knock out any gains we make by coming to a budget deal and more. We urge the Governor and our Congressional Delegation to say no to the proposed House version (American Health Care Act) and Senate version (Better Care Reconciliation Act) of the repeal of Obamacare and cuts to the Medicaid program. Illinois cannot afford another step backwards just as we are coming up for air.

Sample LTE for a Health Care Consumer with pre-existing condition

Dear Editor

I live in (city) in Illinois and I am a (woman/man) who is (age) years old. I have a pre-existing health care condition. I been diagnosed with (or treated for) (name the condition, e.g. asthma, diabetes, cancer, etc.) in the past (year/s). I have insurance now through (my employer or the Marketplace) and pay an

affordable premium. I am very thankful that under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) I have been able to get health care coverage even though I have a pre-existing condition. Before the ACA, I could not get insurance because of my pre-existing condition (or I could get insurance but coverage was excluded for my pre-existing condition so my insurance would not pay for my treatment.) I am very concerned (scared, worried, angry, etc.) that if Congress passes the American Health Care Act or Better Care Reconciliation Act – both of which allow states to not cover pre-existing conditions anymore, that I will not have health insurance in the near future. I am worried that I will not be able to pay for my treatment for (name condition) without insurance coverage and that I will suffer physically and financially. If I cannot afford treatment for (name condition), I am afraid I will get sicker and (my family could suffer financial ruin or bankruptcy). I am asking my legislators and representatives do everything they can to stop the American Health Care Act and Better Care Reconciliation Act from becoming law. My life depends upon it.

Sample LTE for a Health Care Consumer who has a child with a disability

Dear Editor

My name is (name) and I live in (town). My child is (name, age) and she/he has a disability (autism, developmental/intellectual disability, cerebral palsy etc.) and has an Individualized Education Plan. I rely on his/her school to help us care for him/her and provide (specialize instruction, therapy and support). At school, he/she receives special education services including (speech/occupational/physical therapy, an aide in his/her classroom, technology accommodations, etc.) Our school is required by law to provide these services and the school receives federal funding through the Medicaid program to pay for the services for my child. Many people don't even know that Medicaid is federal funding to help children with disabilities learn, thrive, and grow up to (become self-sufficient, live on their own and engage as active members in their communities). Our community and schools rely on Medicaid to help my child and other children integrate into the school which helps teach all children about relating to children who are different from themselves. Integrating children with disabilities into schools funded by Medicaid helps the child with the disability learn and helps his/her classmates learn about diversity, inclusion and empathy. I am very concerned that Congress will pass the American Health Care Act or Better Care Reconciliation Act and that Illinois will lose billions of dollars in Medicaid funding and that schools will lose the ability to care for children like my son/daughter. I don't know where we will turn for help as families with children with disabilities or how our community and school districts will survive that funding shortfall.

Sample LTE for a Medical Professional

Dear Editor

My name is (name) and I am a (doctor, nurse, social worker, psychologist, etc.). I work at (hospital, FQHC, mental health center, nursing home, etc.) I have been taking care of patients with (chronic conditions, cancer, diabetes, mental health, dementia, etc.) for (number) of years. Many of my patients were uninsured before the Affordable Care Act and many of them could not afford insurance or could not even get insured because of pre-existing conditions. Many of my patients had untreated conditions such as (name condition) and by the time they came to see me their health had deteriorated. If they could have afforded insurance, they could have been treated sooner and prevented more serious consequences. (Include an individual patient story here if you can). Many of my patients were not

eligible for Medicaid before the ACA because even though they were low income they were not qualified for Medicaid. Since the passage of the ACA, many of my patients have enrolled in Medicaid or can now afford insurance that will cover all of their health conditions even if they were pre-existing ones. I am very concerned as a health care professional that my patients and the public health of the community will deteriorate if Congress passes either version of the ACA Repeal bill (American Health Care Act or Better Care Reconciliation Act). The Congressional Budget Office has said that over 22 million people will lose coverage. These are my patients and I care about them. I am asking my legislators and representatives to listen to health care professionals like me on the front lines of care who are all in agreement: do not take away the protections in the ACA for people with pre-existing conditions and do not cut the Medicaid program. The ACA has been a lifeline to my patients and to the people of Illinois.

Sample LTE for a Faith Leader

Dear Editor

My name is (name) and I am a (rabbi, priest, pastor, reverend, etc.) in (name of town/community). My congregation/parish/members are a diverse community of people from all walks of life. We support each other spiritually in sickness and in health. My congregation comes together when one of our members is in need to help the sick, the poor, and the elderly. We have projects volunteering in the community to (bring food to ill members, healing, comfort the grieving, etc.) and no family is immune to times of illness and need. We believe it is our religious and civic duty to care for our community and that access to health care is important for everyone no matter what your political belief. We are very concerned that the American Health Care Act and Better Care Reconciliation Act, if passed by Congress, will hurt our congregation and community. Many of our members will no longer be able to afford or get health care coverage and will suffer financially, emotionally and physically. We are asking our legislators and representatives to consider the health care of our communities and not cut Medicaid and protections for people with pre-existing conditions. We must care for one another and not abandon our neighbors.

E-mail addresses of certain print media

The Beacon-News	Aurora	beaconviewpoint@scn1.com
News-Democrat	Belleville	letters@bnd.com
The Pantagraph	Bloomington	letters@pantagraph.com
The News-Gazette	Champaign	news@new-gazette.com
Sun-Times	Chicago	letters@suntimes.com
Tribune	Chicago	ctc-tribletter@tribune.com
Daily Herald	Chicago Suburbs	fencepost@dailyherald.com
Suburban Life Publications	Chicago Suburbs	letters@mysuburbanlife.com
Lawndale News	Cicero	editor@lawndalenews.com

Northwest Herald	Crystal Lake	letters@nwherald.com
Herald & Review	Decatur	gsawyer@herald-review.com
The Journal Standard	Freeport	frontdoor@journalstandard.com
The Herald News	Joliet	heraldnews@stmedianetwork.com
The Daily Journal	Kankakee	pangelo@daily-journal.com
Dispatch/Argus	Moline	letters@qconline.com
Pioneer Press	NW SUBURBS	goddard@pioneerlocal.com
Journal Star	Peoria	forum@pjstar.com
Rockford Register Star	Rockford	local@rrstar.com
The State Journal-Register	Springfield	letters@sj-r.com
The Southtown Star	Tinley Park	letters@southtownstar.com

Protect Our Care Talking points

Senate's Health Care Repeal: You Pay More, You Get Less and the Wealthy Get Big Tax Breaks

The Senate's repeal bill makes health care so much worse for so many people in so many ways, all to give huge tax breaks to the wealthy and big corporations, that it simply can't be fixed. People have rejected repeal. Instead of cutting backroom deals, Republican Senators should start working with Democrats to keep what works and fix what doesn't in the current law.

You pay more and get less - that's the Senate health care repeal bill. It makes health care worse for everyone - it raises costs, cuts coverage, weakens vital protections and ends Medicaid as we know it.

No buyout, bailout or backroom deal can fix what's fundamentally wrong with this bill - it raises costs, cuts coverage, and weakens vital protections, while giving huge tax cuts to the wealthy and big corporations.

- The Trump administration has said they're going to offer "bribes" to Senators to win over their votes.
- Money won't solve the problems created by the bill - for instance, a possible \$45 billion dollar fund for opioid treatment falls [\\$140 billion short](#) in meeting the needs of the millions who will lose access to addiction services.
- GOP Senators themselves have admitted repeal is the wrong approach saying they have "So Many Fundamental Problems With The Bill" and "We Should Be Working With Our Colleagues On The Other Side." They made clear "You Have To Protect Medicaid Expansion" and that "This Bill Will Not Ensure Access To Affordable Health Care."

Every version of health care repeal leads to higher costs for families, especially older Americans.

- The Senate repeal bill will force people to pay more in 2020 for the same coverage that people have today.
- The increase would be particularly harsh for older and low-income Americans. For people 60 to 64 making about \$45,000 a year, total costs would increase by \$11,704.

The American people have overwhelmingly rejected this disastrous repeal bill, but Republicans in Washington refuse to listen to their constituents. More people believe Bigfoot exists than have a favorable opinion of repeal.

- Republicans wrote their bill in secret and are now refusing to defend it in public. There hasn't been a single public hearing, no chance for experts to testify and only 2 Senators are having town hall meetings.
- A USA Today/Suffolk poll found that just 12 percent of Americans approve of the Senate bill, PR poll found 17 percent support and Quinnipiac found only 16 percent support.
- A FOX Newspoll found 52 percent favorability for the Affordable Care Act and 54 percent oppose the Senate bill.
- *Washington Post*: "The dirty little secret of the GOP's health care push: Not even Republicans are demanding this"

This mean and heartless health care repeal breaks all the promises Republicans made - to cover everyone, lower costs and not cut Medicaid.

- **Cuts coverage for 22 million.** Takes away coverage from 22 million Americans - more than the populations of 16 states, including Alaska, Maine, West Virginia and Nevada, combined.
- **Raises costs making coverage unaffordable,** increases premiums and deductibles forcing people to pay 74% more for the same coverage and the average 60 year old earning \$42,000 would have to pay \$5,000 more/year.
- **Imposes an age tax.** A 64 year old earning roughly \$57,000 would have to pay \$13,700 more in 2026.
- **Nearly a trillion in Medicaid cuts.** Ends Medicaid expansion, ends Medicaid as we know it - taking care from seniors in nursing homes, people with disabilities, and children - and will create an enormous hole in state budgets.
- **Guts protections for everyone.** Half of the states would weaken protections so insurance companies could once again deny coverage for maternity care, substance use treatment, and other basic services, meaning people with pre-existing conditions would have to pay more for the care they need and once again there would be annual and lifetime limits meaning families could go bankrupt due to a major illness, even if they have insurance.
- **Defunds Planned Parenthood.** Defunds Planned Parenthood, which 2.4 million people depend on for care.
- **Gives huge tax cuts to the rich.** Gives hundreds of billions in tax breaks to the wealthy and big corporations; including tax cuts for health insurance companies that pay their CEOs over \$500,000 a year.

Republicans should reject repeal and their partisan secret backroom deals and work with Democrats to keep what works and fix what doesn't in our health care system.
