

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2017

The Honorable Thomas E. Price, M.D.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Price:

Republicans in the House of Representatives recently passed a bill that would decimate Medicaid – a program designed to help our most vulnerable children, seniors, and people with disabilities – and make health insurance unaffordable and out of reach for millions of Americans. While the President vowed to protect Medicaid on the campaign trail, many Americans are concerned that he joined you and House Republicans in celebrating legislation that would betray that promise and gut affordable coverage.

Medicaid is crucial to the health and well-being of millions of Americans. Medicaid covers the health care needs of one in three children, including students with special needs. Medicaid helps our seniors afford long term care and the medical care they deserve. Medicaid helps those with disabilities live independently and work outside of the home. Medicaid covers behavioral health and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services vital for fighting the opioid epidemic. Medicaid makes health care accessible for hard-working, middle class families. Simply put, Medicaid needs to be protected.

As the Secretary of Health and Human Services, you serve as the Administration's point person for implementing the President's health care agenda, as well as administering the Medicaid program. This position requires the public's trust and confidence. We are alarmed by the repeated false statements you have made regarding the American Health Care Act, particularly related to the effect that it would have on millions of vulnerable Americans who rely on Medicaid for their coverage or to cover the health care services delivered to a family member.

For example, despite the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) finding that the Republican proposal would cut Medicaid by over \$800 billion over ten years and lead to 14 million fewer people having Medicaid coverage,¹ you disputed those findings. When you were asked the question, "Are you actually saying that \$880 billion in cuts...that that is not going to result in millions of Americans not getting Medicaid?" you responded, "Absolutely not."² You

¹ Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate, H.R. 1628 American Health Care Act of 2017 (May 24, 2017) (available at <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/115th-congress-2017-2018/costestimate/hr1628aspassed.pdf>).

² Interview with Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, State of the Union with Jake Tapper, CNN (May 7, 2017) (available at <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1705/07/sotu.01.html>).

even claimed “there are no cuts to the Medicaid program” under the Republican proposal.³ Despite clear evidence to the contrary, you have stated that the Administration is trying “to make certain that every single person has health coverage”⁴ and have made the incredible claim that “nobody will be worse off financially” under the Republican proposal.⁵ These statements are patently false. Furthermore, you have also tried to discredit the CBO. Without any data to substantiate your assertion, you have stated that the “CBO report’s coverage numbers defy logic”⁶ and that they are “just not believable.”⁷

In combination with the disastrous effects of the American Health Care Act, the President’s budget cuts Medicaid by as much as \$1.3 trillion,⁸ and pays for tax cuts for the wealthy on the backs of those who can least afford it. Middle class families are losing out in order to give tax cuts to the wealthy and special interests.⁹

Your efforts to obfuscate the facts and mislead the public through false statements are a disservice to the American people and offensive to the working families, children, people with disabilities, and seniors in nursing homes for whom Medicaid is a lifeline. We call on you to end to your dishonest statements regarding Medicaid and affordable health insurance coverage.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

³ Interview with Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, State of the Union with Jake Tapper, CNN (May 7, 2017) (available at <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1705/07/sotu.01.html>).

⁴ Interview with Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, Meet the Press, NBC (May 7, 2017) (available at <http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meet-press-may-7-2017-n756001>).

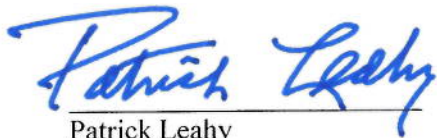
⁵ Interview with Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, Meet the Press, NBC (March 12, 2017) (available at <http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meet-press-03-12-17-n732406>).

⁶ Statement from Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price (March 14, 2017) (available at <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2017/03/14/secretary-price-statement-cbo-report.html>).

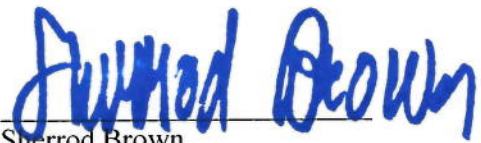
⁷ Statement from Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price (March 13, 2017) (available at <https://www.c-span.org/video/?425357-1/trump-administration-says-cbo-wrong-health-care-bill-costs>).

⁸ Trump Budget Cuts Medicaid Even More Than House Health Bill, Showing Danger of Per Capita Cap, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (May 23, 2017) (available at <http://www.cbpp.org/blog/trump-budget-cuts-medicaid-even-more-than-house-health-bill-showing-danger-of-per-capita-cap>).

⁹ House Republicans’ ACA Repeal Plan Would Mean Big Tax Cuts for Wealthy, Insurers, Drug Companies, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (March 8, 2017) (available at <http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/3-8-17tax.pdf>).



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



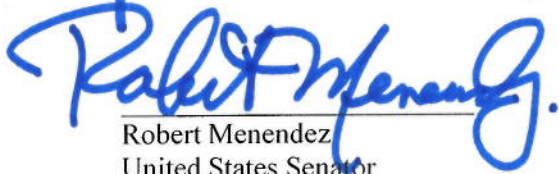
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



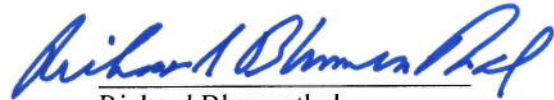
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United States Senator



Al Franken
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Robert Menendez
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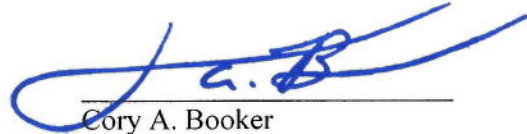
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



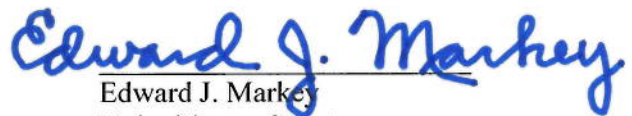
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