

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2017

Senator Mitch McConnell
United States Capitol Building, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lamar Alexander
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Orrin Hatch
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Chairman Alexander and Chairman Hatch:

We write to request that the Senate work in a bipartisan, open and transparent way to improve and reform the health care system. Democrats stand ready – as we always have -- to develop legislation with Republicans that will improve quality, lower costs, and expand coverage for all Americans. But Republicans need to set aside their current partisan efforts and work with us to get this done.

Last week, the House passed a partisan bill that will dramatically increase the cost of health insurance for those who need it most and lower the quality of coverage. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that the underlying bill would result in 24 million Americans losing health insurance, while facing increased costs. The House passed bill also eliminates more than \$800 billion from state Medicaid programs and important patient and consumer protections – especially for women and all those with pre-existing conditions. Finally, the House bill was passed without a final official cost or coverage estimate from CBO and may contain provisions that violate the Senate’s rules regarding the privileged reconciliation process.

We urge you to drop the current partisan effort to repeal and replace health care reform through reconciliation. We also urge you to discourage the ongoing effort by the Administration to destabilize the health care marketplace, which could lead to rising insurance premiums for all and make it harder for families to access health care. If repeal is abandoned, we stand ready to work with you to help all Americans get the affordable health care they need. Instead of trying to change the House’s “repeal and replace” legislation, which has an uncertain path to the President’s desk, you could instead choose to work with us on a bipartisan health reform package that can garner 60 votes in the Senate and pass the House with Republican and Democratic votes.

Working together to improve health care requires an open and transparent process that includes public hearings, an open amendment process, and ample time for debate in the full Senate. There are a number of issue areas we want to work on with you, including:

- Reducing the cost of prescription drugs
- Decreasing the cost of premiums without cutting the quality of benefits
- Making the cost of care more affordable by reducing out-of-pocket costs
- Stabilizing and strengthening the insurance market
- Helping more struggling families get covered
- Making it easier and less expensive for small businesses to provide health care

We look forward to your response and working with you in a bipartisan process to improve the health care system for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Chuck Schumer

Dick Durbin

Richard Blumenthal

Ron Wyden

Tom Blaine

Brian Schatz

Ben Ray Lujan

Mark R. Warner

Jack Reed

Patty Murray

Janet Mock

Frank Lautenberg

Jeanne Shaker

Tom Odell

Whitmore

Rabit Menendez

Mazie K. Ariano

Debbie Stabenow

Jumhad Brown

Bill Nelson

Jon Tester

Al Franken

Whitman

Dianne Feinstein

Maggie Hassan

Ben Sanders

Janis

Edward J. Markey

Billings

Chris Coen

Catherine Cory Motta

Mary F. Burt

Bob Carey, Jr.

Thos Van Haller

Jeffrey A. Munkley

Elizabeth Ham

Heidi Heitkamp

Amy Klobuchar

Paul Manchillo

Maria Cantwell

Ben Cardin

Tom Carper

Gene McCasill

Tammy Duckworth

Patrick Leahy

Kirsten Gillibrand

Joe Donnelly

Angus King