



1201 16th St., N.W. | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Lily Eskelsen García
President

Rebecca S. Pringle
Vice President

Princess R. Moss
Secretary-Treasurer

John C. Stocks
Executive Director

January 10, 2017

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association and the students they serve, we urge you to **Vote No** on the Senate Budget Resolution (S. Con. Res. 3) that takes the first step toward repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), yet with no replacement plan to protect millions of Americans, including children, from losing health care coverage. Votes associated with this issue may be included in the NEA Legislative Report Card for the 115th Congress.

We strongly support the ACA which ensures quality, affordable health care access for millions of children and families across the country. The ACA has increased health care coverage in every demographic group resulting in an all-time low rate of uninsured people, expanded Medicaid coverage for millions of children in low-income families, and protected people with pre-existing conditions from being denied coverage, among many other benefits which have improved our health care system.

Repealing the ACA without a replacement is likely to result in the following: Take health insurance away from 30 million Americans, 82 percent of whom are in working families; double the number of uninsured children in America, leaving 4 million children uninsured; cause healthcare premiums to increase dramatically for millions of Americans; take health coverage away from millions of low and moderate income Americans by cutting funding for Medicaid expansion; and increase taxes for people who purchase their own insurance by abolishing health care tax credits. Children, working families, seniors – the most vulnerable among us – are the ones who will bear the heaviest brunt of the repeal impacts. For more information, [please explore this state by state information on how your constituents will be affected by ACA repeal.](#)

We also are deeply concerned that the Budget Resolution paves the way for additional damaging policies to Medicaid and Medicare that would weaken and limit access to quality health care services to children, families, and seniors. In particular, we oppose Medicare “premium support” commonly known as vouchers, and drastic cuts to Medicaid funding in the form of block grants or per capita caps. We believe any attempt to tear down these health care programs that have been vital in providing and expanding high-quality health care to millions of Americans, particularly children and those most vulnerable among us, would be a great disservice.

Medicaid, along with the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), currently ensure that a third of American children can get the medical care they need. Block grants shift costs to the states and will lead to funding shortfalls that will strain state budgets. Similarly, the use of Medicaid per capita caps would impose hard limits on federal spending and are a bad deal for

states. Caps will ultimately force states to find additional money in their own budgets, limit services, or reduce health care coverage for low-income individuals and kids. Most states are already under tight budget constraints forcing them to make critical decisions between adequately funding health care or public education.

Meanwhile, turning Medicare into a “premium support” or voucher program will shift a greater share of costs to beneficiaries as health care costs grow at a faster pace than federal support. As limited support from a Medicare voucher raises premiums and increases out-of-pocket costs we will see a ballooning population of seniors, who often live on a small, fixed-income, be forced to make tough decisions between health care and basic necessities. [According to the Kaiser Family Foundation](#), in 2014 half of all people on Medicare had incomes less than \$24,150, which is equivalent to approximately 200 percent of the poverty level. And, a total of 66% of Medicare beneficiaries have three or more chronic health conditions. Clearly, a majority of seniors who rely on Medicare cannot afford to have their benefits cut or their out-of-pocket costs increase.

As the Senate begins considering dozens of amendments during “vote-a-rama,” we note our **support** for amendments that:

- protect health care coverage for children, seniors, and the most vulnerable and prevent cuts to Medicaid, CHIP, Medicare, or Social Security;
- repeal the 40 percent excise tax on health care plans, which has an indiscriminate impact on educators who have traded salary increases for the long-term security of a comprehensive health plan and have paid their share of their premiums
- protect the health care tax exclusion for employer provided health care.

Finally, similarly, we note our **opposition** to amendments that:

- limit health care coverage for children, seniors, and the most vulnerable and cuts Medicaid, CHIP, and Medicare, or shifts costs to beneficiaries.

We respectfully urge you **Vote No** on S. Con. Res. 3, which paves the way repeal the Affordable Care Act without a replacement.

Sincerely,



Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations