



# The Capitol Circuit

December 2019

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## National Advocacy

### U.S. Appeals Court Rules on Health Care Law

On Wednesday, December 18, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled on the Texas v. United States case that the Affordable Care Act (ACA)'s individual mandate is unconstitutional but did not invalidate the entire health care law. The appeals court has sent the case back to the lower court to reconsider whether any of the health care law can stand. [The Foundation joined 16 other patient organizations, who filed an amicus curiae \(“friend-of-the-court”\) brief for the case back in April, in expressing concern that the ruling creates continued uncertainty for millions of individuals living with serious and chronic conditions who rely on the ACA to access comprehensive health coverage.](#) Additionally, [28 national patient and consumer organizations including the Foundation released a statement conveying disappointment that the ruling did not definitively uphold the](#)

critical patient protections established by the ACA. The ruling does not affect current health insurance coverage, coverage you have signed up for to receive in 2020, or those who have benefited from Medicaid expansion.

### Congress Races to Beat Budget Deadline

Congress has released a bipartisan deal to fund the government through Fiscal Year 2020 - avoiding the need for another stopgap measure or a government shutdown. Congress must pass and the President must sign the bills before the December 20<sup>th</sup> deadline. Thanks to epilepsy advocates' work this year, the spending packages include vital funding for research and programs important to the epilepsy community. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)'s Epilepsy Program would receive \$9.5 million - a \$1 million increase over last year. The package also includes a \$2.6 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a 10-year reauthorization of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), and the CREATES Act, which will help end tactics currently used to delay generics from coming to market.

The House of Representatives passed both spending bundles (H.R. 1865 and H.R. 1158) on Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> and the Senate is expected to approve both bills on Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. The White House has indicated that the President will sign them into law.

### Epilepsy Foundation Urges Bipartisan Solutions to Help Lower the Costs of Prescription Drugs

There have been numerous drug pricing packages moving through Congress this year, including the Lower Health Care Costs Act (S. 1895), the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act (S. 2543), and the Elijah Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), but none have yet become law. On Tuesday, December 17, the Foundation submitted a letter to Congressional leaders, chairmen and ranking members of committees of jurisdiction to thank Congress for their efforts to address access to and the high cost of prescription medications but urging them to do more to pass more comprehensive bipartisan solutions. We highlight certain bipartisan provisions including a cap on out-of-pocket costs in Medicare part D, passing step therapy reforms, increasing transparency of the supply chain, and other policies to help lower the costs of prescription drugs. Learn more and read our principles and positions on Access to Prescription Medications at [advocacy.epilepsy.com/medication-access](https://advocacy.epilepsy.com/medication-access).

## Paul's Law Heads to Governor's Desk

Incredible news! Paul's Law (S. 4141/A. 6011), New Jersey's Seizure Safe Schools legislation, passed unanimously in the full Assembly and Senate on Monday, December 16th. The bill now heads toward Governor Murphy's desk. We want to thank all of the New Jersey grassroots advocates who took action and contacted their state legislators - sending 5,890 letters!

Learn more about the legislation and this initiative at [advocacy.epilepsy.com/seizuresafeschools](http://advocacy.epilepsy.com/seizuresafeschools).

## 2020 State Legislative Sessions

As 2019 comes to a close, the Foundation is gearing up for state legislative sessions beginning in January 2020. We are ready to engage and advocate on behalf of people living with epilepsy, their families, and caregivers to ensure access to physician-directed and patient-centered care and the rights of people with epilepsy. We want to make sure you are well informed about what is happening right in your backyard so that you don't miss an opportunity to share your voice with state and local policymakers. Please take a minute to update your contact information, including your home address, so that we can send targeted alerts based on your state and congressional district. Or take a minute to recruit a few more advocates! [Sign up or update your contact information here](#).



We encourage you to invite others to join our [Speak Up, Speak Out!](#) advocacy network. Members receive the monthly *Capitol Circuit* newsletter and alerts about opportunities to advocate for the epilepsy community throughout the year. Growing our advocacy network is critical to achieving

our public policy goals as we move through busy state and federal legislative sessions. Make a difference today by sharing our Speak Up, Speak Out! Network on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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