

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

March 7, 2017

Dear (Representative/Senator),

I hope that this letter finds you well. On behalf of the Episcopal Church, I write in response to yesterday's unveiling of the American Health Care Act. As you may know, our Church upholds affordable and effective health care for every American, backs Medicaid as an essential program for low-income families, and supports adequate government funding for research and medical care for women's health. Our vision for America includes a compassionate and economically viable health care system that protects low-income, elderly, and at-risk populations.

The provisions outlined in the American Health Care Act regrettably fall short of the health care standards that we maintain are essential to a thriving and beloved community. Through replacing our current subsidies with a tax credit system, the American Health Care Act would sacrifice the profound needs of at-risk communities for the convenience of wealthier populations. The proposal to defund Planned Parenthood (which provides low-income women—many of whom rely on Medicaid—with broad-based health services, including cancer screening), and sunseting the Medicaid expansion would further compound the vulnerability of those most in need. A thorough evaluation by the Congressional Budget Office would offer more clarity on the full impact of the Act, yet the Act is advancing without this crucial step of accountability.

While the Episcopal Church commends your intention to improve and streamline the Affordable Care Act, as well as your worthy effort to protect those with preexisting conditions and to create an appropriate transitional timeline, we believe that the American Health Care Act is not enough for America. This current proposal falls woefully short of our spiritual calling to care for the 'least of these,' as well as the noble values upon which our great nation was founded. To achieve life, and fullness of life, every American must have affordable, accessible, health care. As you consider the American Health Care Act, I pray that you remember those persons who may not be physically present with you in the room, but who rely on your leadership and protection to survive.

Thank you for your consideration.

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The Episcopal Church