



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SENATORS, PLEASE: REPRESENT YOUR PEOPLE AND PROTECT THEIR FUTURE

Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs, issued the following statement Thursday in response to the Senate GOP's health care bill:

The Senate's long-awaited health care repeal bill has surfaced. It is a shameful abandonment of millions of people who need health coverage. After years of promising to lower insurance costs, the bill will raise them by thousands of dollars for people in the insurance marketplaces. People will lose protections that ensure a decent package of benefits, and those with pre-existing conditions will no longer be able to afford coverage. Medicaid would be gutted. The expansion funding will end by the beginning of 2024, leaving millions of people with no coverage. The basic Medicaid program is slashed and capped more stringently than in the House bill.

The destruction of Medicaid is one of the most shameful aspects of this legislation. Medicaid is a guarantor of health and economic security in our nation. Nearly one-half of our [babies](#) are born with maternity coverage through Medicaid; Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program cover 45 percent of the children younger than 6. More than one in five people in [rural areas](#) rely on Medicaid coverage (in Maine, it's nearly one in four; in West Virginia, one in three). Twenty-five million [women](#) receive health care through Medicaid, as do 1.75 million [veterans](#). About 60 percent of [nursing home residents](#) are covered through Medicaid.

The federal government on average provides [63 percent of Medicaid funding](#) (2016 data). That's a very good deal for states. It is an even better deal in poorer states. In Nevada, the federal government pays 76.5 percent; in Ohio, 69.5 percent; in West Virginia, 77.7 percent. The Senate bill will cut federal Medicaid funding even more than the House bill. Both create restrictive caps, but the Senate would make its caps tighter starting in 2025. It's too soon to know exactly how much Medicaid funding will be slashed, but the House bill cut \$839 billion over 10 years, so it is likely that the Senate bill cuts even more. Senators who vote for this are turning their backs on their own people. Instead of providing a federal guarantee of health care for those most in need, this bill will send states headlong into a future with less and less federal sharing of the health care burden. In 2016, Louisiana received nearly \$5.5 billion in federal Medicaid funds; Arizona received nearly \$8.4 billion. Senators who vote for this abandonment of the federal role will be complicit in denying care to millions of their own constituents.

And for what? The shameful truth is that this bill, like the House version, will cut hundreds of billions of dollars in taxes for the wealthiest among us and for the medical and insurance industries. It is hard to

imagine a bill with worse priorities, that takes away so much from the most vulnerable among us to give so much to the most comfortable.

This is not what Americans want. Between 70 – 85 percent in a [recent poll](#) commissioned by Lutheran Services in America believed people with disabilities, children, and seniors in nursing homes should be able to keep Medicaid benefits. Even among those who identify as conservative, 62 percent said they did not believe cutting Medicaid funding should be a top priority for Congress this year.

Senators, please: this is a bill that harms your own people, and weakens your own state. Please reject it.

The Coalition on Human Needs is made up of more than 100 national organizations including faith groups, service providers, policy experts, labor, civil rights and other advocates concerned with meeting the needs of low-income and vulnerable people.