



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 2, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to vote against H.R. 596, legislation that will repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In pursuing yet another vote against the health reform law, the House Republican leadership persists in its campaign to undermine the coverage expansions of the ACA, erecting barriers that will keep millions of uninsured Americans from accessing coverage under the law.

Based on the latest Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate of the ACA coverage expansions, 19 million U.S. residents would lose coverage in 2015 if the ACA is repealed – people who would lack coverage today if not for the ACA. CBO also estimates that 36 million individuals remain uninsured today, even with the expansion of coverage through the marketplaces and Medicaid.

In large part, millions remain uninsured because a number of governors and state legislatures have refused to pursue an expansion of their Medicaid programs or have prohibited government agencies from providing ACA enrollment assistance to the residents of their states. Twenty-two states have refused to extend Medicaid coverage to lower-income residents, turning away coverage that is almost completely subsidized by the federal government. Other states refuse to provide education and assistance to people who need help negotiating the complex decisions involved in applying for coverage. The Kaiser Family Foundation found that the lack of information about enrollment choices is making it difficult for many individuals to access coverage that is available to them.

This partisan resistance to the ACA coverage expansions at the state level is bolstered by these votes to repeal the ACA in Washington. It is time to break the partisan deadlock on health care reform and to focus on needed changes that will strengthen, not weaken, family health security – reforms that both improve and build upon the ACA.

We can begin improving the ACA to expand access to affordable coverage by eliminating the 40 percent excise tax on health benefits, by basing eligibility for premium subsidies on the costs of family coverage, and by ensuring that new fees intended for commercial insurance issuers will not apply to nonprofit coverage. We hope that bipartisan attention will be focused soon on productive ways of addressing needed modifications to the ACA.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT