

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 18, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

Over the past 15 years, Congress has made enormous progress toward delivering affordable health care for all Americans. This includes providing additional financial support through enhanced Premium Tax Credits (PTCs) for the 20 million Americans who buy their coverage on the individual marketplaces, expanding Medicaid to cover an additional 24 million people and lowering prescription drug costs for tens of millions of seniors. This work has resulted in the highest rate of health insurance coverage our country has ever seen and has moved us ever closer to realizing our goal: that affordable health care is a fundamental right for all Americans.

If the enhanced PTCs as passed in the Inflation Reduction Act are allowed to expire in 2025, over 20 million Americans will see a sudden increase in their health insurance costs. In addition, an estimated 3 million Americans could lose their health insurance and nearly 9 million people will pay more – \$406 per person – for coverage.¹ The enhanced PTCs have protected millions of Americans from higher health care costs, reduced the number of Americans without coverage, provided robust choices for consumers and provided stability for health care providers, particularly in rural areas. It is clear that the enhanced PTCs have proven to be an overwhelming success, and, as millions of Americans face an increase in their insurance costs, it is time to make the investment permanent. We strongly urge the Senate to act to extend this financial support as soon as possible.

The enhanced PTCs have been a key driver of the record 21.4 million people being signed up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Today, 96% of consumers have a choice of three or more health plans in the ACA marketplaces, which increases competition among health plans and choices for consumers. These improvements, along with robust employer coverage levels, have contributed to a record low uninsured rate – 7.6 percent in 2023.²

The enhanced PTCs have meaningfully improved health coverage for all racial and ethnic groups, with the largest gains among Black and Latino Americans. From 2020 to 2023, the number of Black Americans enrolled in ACA coverage increased by 95 percent to 1.7 million and the number of Latino Americans enrolled in ACA coverage increased by over 100 percent to 3.4

¹ Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA). “Fact Sheet: What Happens to Premiums If the Extra Help from the American Rescue Plan Expires?” HHS.Gov, 24 June 2022, www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/06/22/fact-sheet-what-happens-premiums-if-extra-help-american-rescue-plan-expires.html#:~:text=Premiums%20will%20skyrocket%20%2D%2D%20if,at%20the%20end%20of%202022.

² Lukens, Gideon. “Health Insurance Costs Will Rise Steeply If Premium Tax Credit Improvements Expire.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 4 June 2024, www.cbpp.org/research/health/health-insurance-costs-will-rise-steeply-if-premium-tax-credit-improvements-expire#_ftn7.

million in 2023.^{3,4} The policy has also helped older, self-employed, and middle-income Americans who gained access to marketplace plans due to lower premiums.

Policies to ensure access to affordable health coverage help working Americans and also help to stabilize providers in rural and underserved communities. Providers and hospitals in these communities have faced significant workforce and operating cost challenges, which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Communities in states that have not yet expanded Medicaid continue to face high uncompensated care costs that worsen these providers' financial stability. The enhanced PTCs have helped providers by increasing coverage and reducing cost sharing.

Recent analyses predict that premiums will rise in *every* state for people of *all* ages and income levels. However, enrollees in smaller and rural states with high underlying marketplace premiums, older enrollees and people with incomes above 400 percent of the federal poverty level would be hit the hardest by the enhanced PTCs expiring.⁵ This, in turn, would strain hospitals, physicians, nurses, pharmacies and others whose care would continue without compensation, compounding pre-existing problems, and could be disastrous for rural and underserved communities.

We stand ready to join you in working to pass this critical legislation through Congress and get it signed into law swiftly. Thank you for your leadership on this urgent and shared priority.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

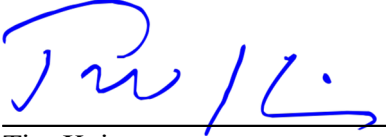


Alex Padilla
United States Senator

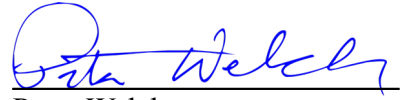
³ *Health Insurance Coverage and Access to Care Among Black Americans: Recent Trends and Key Challenges*, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), 7 June 2024, aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/4fc0ddbcee8d583d57e399dad6201536/aspe-coverage-access-black-americans-ib.pdf.

⁴ *Health Insurance Coverage and Access to Care Among Latino Americans: Recent Trends and Key Challenges*, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), 7 June 2024, aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/819559944370d2e8a24dc5bc38da6c7b/aspe-coverage-access-latinos-ib.pdf.

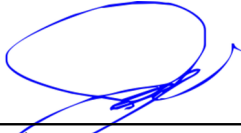
⁵ Lukens, Gideon. "Health Insurance Costs Will Rise Steeply If Premium Tax Credit Improvements Expire." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 4 June 2024, www.cbpp.org/research/health/health-insurance-costs-will-rise-steeply-if-premium-tax-credit-improvements-expire#_ftn7.



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



John Fetterman
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



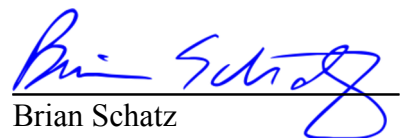
Richard Blumenthal
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Michael F. Bennet
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Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



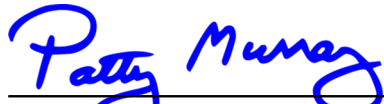
Brian Schatz
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John Hickenlooper
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Jack Reed
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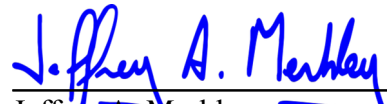
Patty Murray
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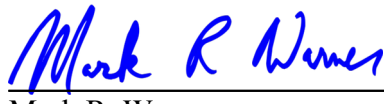
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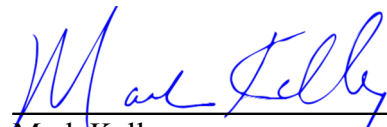
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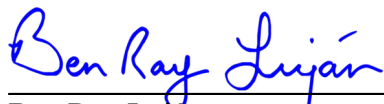
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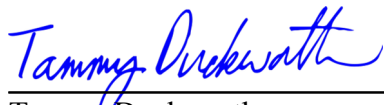
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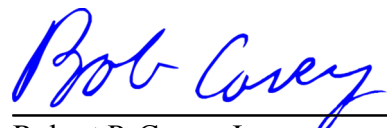
Eaphonza Butler
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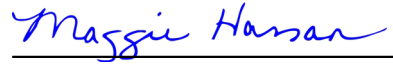
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Thomas R. Carper
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Margaret Wood Hassan
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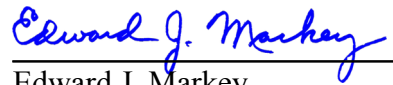
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United States Senator



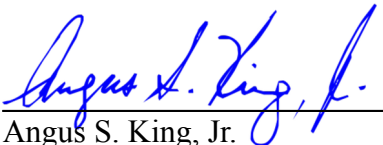
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Debbie Stabenow
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United States Senator