

NATIONAL JEWISH ORGANIZATION LETTER ON HEALTH CARE BILL

September 25, 2017

Member of the United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

We, the undersigned national Jewish organizations and institutions, are united in our belief that government should work to expand, not limit, access to health care. We are deeply concerned that the Graham-Cassidy health care proposal will significantly undermine access to care for the most vulnerable. We call on you to oppose this bill when it comes to a vote.

Jewish tradition stresses the importance of health care. Maimonides, a revered medieval Jewish scholar and physician, listed health care among the most important communal services that a city had to offer to its residents. Taking care of one's own health and visiting the sick are widely understood as core Jewish obligations. At the same time, we know that religious and charitable organizations alone cannot offer patients the full care they need. Today, Medicaid plays an essential role in the health care of low-income Americans – including workers, people with disabilities, and the elderly. It helps treat the sick, allows people with disabilities to live in and contribute to their communities, and assures parents that their children can see a doctor. A robust Medicaid program is essential for health of the body and the spirit.

The Graham-Cassidy legislation would undercut Medicaid and be a dramatic, reckless step backward in the history of the American health care system. Among other harmful provisions, transforming Medicaid into a per-capita cap system would not only take away health care from those who have benefited from the ACA's Medicaid expansion, but would harm populations that have been covered by Medicaid since its inception. States will face impossible choices prioritizing among people with disabilities, low-income Americans, and children and will have no option but to slash services that are essential for the daily lives of millions.

We appreciate the desire to improve our health care system and want to work with you to design solutions that strengthen our nation. However, we oppose this legislation that makes health care less accessible, more expensive and poorer in quality. We call on you to vote against the Graham-Cassidy proposal.

If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Weinstein, Associate Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, bweinstein@rac.org or 202-387-2800.

Sincerely,

American Conference of Cantors

Bend the Arc Jewish Action

B'nai B'rith International

Central Conference of American Rabbis

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

The Jewish Federations of North America

Jewish Women International

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

National Council of Jewish Women

Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies

NFTY - The Reform Jewish Youth Movement

Rabbinical Assembly

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Union for Reform Judaism

Women of Reform Judaism