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## **40 Faith Organizations Send Message to Healthcare Markup Committees**

*Any change, repeal, or repair of the ACA must be comprehensive in a single bill that meets our 10 priorities for a faithful healthcare system*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today representatives from 40 national, faith-based organizations sent a letter to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees urging that any legislation that changes, repeals, or repairs the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) meet ten priorities for a faithful healthcare system.

The signers crafted these priorities from “a shared commitment to a faith-inspired moral vision of a healthcare system that offers health, wholeness, and human dignity for all,” the letter states. “The scriptures of the Abrahamic traditions of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, as well as the sacred teachings of other faiths, understand that addressing the general welfare of the nation includes giving particular attention to people experiencing poverty or sickness.”

Principles include **preserving the coverage gains** made by the ACA, **upholding the purpose of Medicaid** by refraining from structural changes to how the program is funding (no block grants or per capita caps), **maintaining the essential health benefits** currently provided by the ACA, and **preventing insurance companies from discrimination** against women, the elderly, and people in poverty. **The letter and the ten principles can be [viewed online](#).**

### **Quotes from faith leaders representing the 40 organizations can be found below:**

“NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice has advocated for healthcare for all in our nation because of our commitment to the dignity of all people. We are called to care for those who suffer, and we are challenged to support all of our neighbors so they can realize their full potential. As part of this mandate, we have an obligation to protect populations who have historically been discriminated against because of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status. To that end, we seek a society where all have access to quality, affordable, equitable healthcare.” – **Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice**

“The Jewish scholar Maimonides taught that healthcare is a core element of creating a just society. We believe that healthcare should be a right for all, not a privilege for some. Instead



of repealing or weakening the important progress and reforms made by the Affordable Care Act, we must work together to expand and enhance access to comprehensive healthcare for all people.” – **Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism**

“Congress must not phase out the Affordable Care Act’s Medicaid expansion. Health and hunger are inextricably linked. Hunger leads to poor health and poor health worsens hunger. In fact, hunger and food insecurity add \$160 billion to our national health care spending. Before the ACA, 1 out of 3 people with chronic medical conditions had to choose between receiving treatment and putting food on the table. If Congress restructures Medicaid, millions will once again be forced to make this terrible choice.”- **Rev. David Beckmann, President, Bread for the World**

“If we believe in equality for all in the United States, we must assure that every person can get quality affordable health care. To take away access to health care by diminishing Medicaid is to take away the dignity that the Affordable Care Act has provided for millions of people. Congress should expand, not shrink opportunity for people who are poor and struggling. This is a moral imperative.” – **Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation**

“A vision anchored in biblical and theological values promotes Health Care as a basic human right. The 10 principles spell out critical health needs that must be achieved. In a nation as wealthy as the United States, no one should be excluded from health care coverage.” – **Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church**

“As women religious we take seriously the gospel call to care for all those in need and we are committed to the precepts of Catholic Social Teaching that remind us that the dignity of the person is at the core of our vision of a moral society. Catholic sisters have a long history of honoring the dignity of the individual by providing healing care to people across this nation. Health care is the right of each person and the responsibility of our society. We will continue to advocate for a U.S. health care system is equitable, affordable, and accessible to all.” – **Sister Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, Executive Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious**

“NCJW firmly believes access to affordable, quality health care is a moral imperative. Each of us deserves the ability to care for our health without risking our economic security or other basic needs, regardless of income, race, gender, or other factors. We intend to fight every



effort to roll back the clock on access to coverage and care and we call on all to join us. The life you save may be your neighbor's, your co-worker's, or even your own." – **Nancy K.**

**Kaufman, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women**

"As Vincentians who actually enter the homes of the needy on a regular basis to meet with them personally and bring help, we often see first-hand how important many parts of the Affordable Care Act are to those struggling to get by. At least they have insurance and can get those critical services so that the lack of adequate medical care does not further impede their difficult path to self-sufficiency. It would be extremely counter-productive to withdraw that now without knowing what precisely would replace the Affordable Care Act. Our faith compels us to assure that health coverage is truly a right not denied on the basis of income or status." – **Sheila Gilbert, President, Society of St. Vincent de Paul**

"In the sixth chapter of Paul's Letter to the Galatians, the Apostle affirms both that 'each one of us is to carry our own load' (vs. 5) and that we are to 'carry each other's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ.' (vs. 2). Applying these faith-based principles to public policy dealing with health care, we can see that we are encouraged to practice self-care, AND to do so within the larger context of working together to provide for the common good. Therefore, as a Bible-based movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, we join with other people of faith to support and defend affordable, quality health care for all individuals." – **Rev. Dr. Laird A. Thomason, Minister for Health and Wellness, Disciples Center for Public Witness**

"Religious values affirm that caring for children, people who are sick, and people who are experiencing poverty are moral imperatives. The proposals that we have seen to replace the Affordable Care Act are an affront to religious values and morals. They include block grants for Medicaid and tax deductions and/or health savings accounts for health care. These are proposals that will have a devastating effect on people experiencing poverty, people who have disabilities, and children. The effects of these proposals are directly contrary to the religious values of our organization, the Religious Institute, and the religious values of the more than 9,000 people in our network. Reducing access to health care is immoral and hypocritical. Lawmakers won't lose their healthcare if the ACA is repealed, but millions of Americans will. The Religious Institute firmly opposes any plan that rolls back the gains made under the ACA." – **Rev. Marie Alford-Harkey, President and CEO, Religious Institute**

"As justice-seeking people of faith we support health care for all who need it. We believe access to health care is a human right and it is the responsibility of a government to provide health care for all its people. " – **Deaconess Darlene DiDomineck, Interim Executive Director, Methodist Federation for Social Action**



"Affordable, universal health care is not a privilege, but a requirement to protect the life and dignity of every person. The government has an obligation to ensure that affordable health care is accessible and available to everyone." – **Lawrence Couch, Director, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd**

"Having worked in Healthcare Administration for many years I know what a difference the Affordable Care Act made in the lives of many people. Having health insurance enabled people to receive care for health problems before they became major issues. Having access to affordable health care is a human right not a privilege." – **Sister Danielle Bonetti, CSJ, Congregational Leadership Team, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet**

"We rely on a comprehensive Health Care System to assist those who participate with us in our social service projects." – **Sister Brigid Lawlor, RGS, Sisters of the Good Shepherd**

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*The Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC) is a coalition of faith-based organizations and advocacy offices in Washington, D.C., which work together for a more just, peaceful, and ecologically sustainable world.*

*NETWORK, a national Catholic Social Justice lobby, which educates, organizes, and lobbies for economic and social transformation, has a more than 40-year track record of lobbying for critical federal programs that support those at the margins and prioritize the common good.*