

October 23, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Alexander, and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to you as religious organizations, congregational denominations, and faith traditions about the need to take quick, bipartisan action to stabilize the individual health insurance market. Our scriptures affirm our moral responsibility to ensure all may live with dignity and the opportunity to recognize their full potential. Access to affordable, quality health care should not and cannot be a privilege; it is a requirement rooted in faith to protect the life and dignity of every person.

**We are encouraged and supportive of the Bipartisan Health Care Stabilization Act of 2017 negotiated by Senators Alexander and Murray and urge Congress to pass it without delay.**

Our faith communities appreciate the value of open dialogue across difference. It is past time for Congress to move away from the partisanship and divisiveness that has plagued this issue and instead move forward in a collaborative and bipartisan manner. The individual market and those who rely on it to purchase coverage are facing instability and rising premiums, and this bill can provide relief. We call on Congress to quickly pass this bill to:

- (1) Continue the Cost Sharing Reduction payments for two years to help provide multi-year stability. These payments are crucial for stabilizing the marketplace and they help people with low incomes afford copayments, deductibles, and other health care expenses;
- (2) Restore funding for ACA outreach, education, and enrollment; and
- (3) Streamline the section 1332 state waiver process to give states meaningful flexibility while maintaining guardrails to protect low income people, those with serious health conditions, and other vulnerable populations.

While this bipartisan package does not address all our concerns regarding access to quality, affordable health care in this nation, it represents a necessary and constructive first step to

address the immediate problems within the individual market. We urge you to pass it without delay and are praying for your success.

Sincerely,

American Muslim Health Professionals

Bread for the World

Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Faith that Heals Ministries, Tennessee Conference United Methodist Church

Franciscan Action Network

Friends Committee on National Legislation

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

Islamic Society of North America

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Methodist Federation for Social Action

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Council of Churches

National Council of Jewish Women, Inc.

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Pax Christi USA

PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Institute Justice Team

Society of St. Vincent de Paul, National Council of the United States

The Episcopal Church

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association

Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society

CC: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

Members of the U.S. Senate