

Legislation Text

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Expressing sincere gratitude to the United States Senators who are standing in opposition to legislation that would strip healthcare from millions of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians and calling upon these Senators to use every means at their disposal to prevent its passage, including withholding consent for any waiver of rules and using the process of filibuster by amendment.

WHEREAS, On May 4, 2017, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Health Care Act, also known as the AHCA; and

WHEREAS, The AHCA is designed to destroy the vital health care safeguards guaranteed to all Americans under the Affordable Care Act also known as the ACA or Obamacare; and

WHEREAS, According to the Congressional Budget Office, the AHCA will take away health care from 777,000 Pennsylvanians alone and 23 million Americans throughout the nation, which will result in 24,000-44,000 more Americans dying every year from lack of insurance, not to mention medical bankruptcies, lost wages, and untreated illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The AHCA will also hike premiums on average by \$1,003 in Pennsylvania, end the federal protections for people with pre-existing conditions, allow insurance companies to charge older Americans significantly more for their health care, cut \$834 billion from Medicaid, cutting off nearly 372,000 Pennsylvanians from this vital service, reinstate lifetime and annual benefit caps even those with employer coverage, make women pay more for health insurance than men, defund Planned Parenthood, and harm children with special needs by cutting Special Education funds for schools; and

WHEREAS, A small group of Republican Senators, all men, are currently deciding the future of the American health care system by working on this legislation completely in secret, without any public hearings, without receiving any feedback from key stakeholders, and without allowing the public to see the text of the legislation; and

WHEREAS, This nearly-unprecedented secrecy is contrary to basic democratic principles, and it is imperative that the Senate reveal the contents of the bill and allow public deliberation and debate following action by the Congressional Budget Office to calculate the number of Americans who will lose health care insurance if it passes and to evaluate the significant effect on one of the largest sectors of the American economy; and

WHEREAS, Beginning on June 19th, Democratic members of the U.S. Senate held the Senate floor and vowed to withhold consent from virtually every routine item of business in the Senate so long as attempts to pass the bill through this profoundly undemocratic and secretive process persist; and

WHEREAS, There is an additional avenue through which senators can defeat the AHCA, a tactic known as "Filibuster by Amendment". During "reconciliation," a special process being used to expedite passage of the AHCA, an unlimited number of amendments are allowed. Any senator can file as many amendments as they want and then call them up for a vote on the Senate floor during a period called "vote-a-rama"; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of Americans throughout the nation have been creating personalized amendments for their senators to introduce on the floor of the Senate in an effort to delay a vote on the AHCA until Republicans agree to let the public read the bill and hold public hearings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the United States senators who have risen in opposition to legislation that would strip healthcare from millions of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians and calls upon these senators to use every means at their disposal to prevent its passage, including withholding consent for any waiver of rules and using the process of filibuster by amendment

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey with a request that he read its contents into the Congressional Record and thereby share the resolution with the American people as a reflection of the sincere sentiments of this body.