



January 17, 2017

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Oppose the Nomination of Representative Tom Price for Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 210 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to oppose the nomination of Representative Tom Price to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). His record on the House Budget Committee of supporting drastic funding cuts to HHS for vital services provided to low-income individuals, seniors, and people with disabilities undermine the very mission of the Department, which is to “enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans.” Rep. Price’s support for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid expansion, as well as his support for defunding Planned Parenthood further, demonstrate his disregard for the mission of HHS and his unsuitability to head the agency.

As a member and, later, Chair of the House Budget Committee, Rep. Price supported budget proposals that granted tax cuts to profitable corporations and the wealthy and then sought to offset the lost revenue by cutting federal support for programs that reduce poverty and hunger, increase access to health care, give children a better start, and provide other vital services. Rep. Price supports capping Medicaid, a plan that would force states to reduce health services and eligibility for the poor and likely cut other state services to make up for lost federal revenue. Rep. Price supports cutting billions from Medicare, converting it to a voucher which would lose value over time and shift more and more costs onto seniors and people with disabilities. Further, he supports the repeal of the ACA, a plan that the Urban Institute estimates would cause 30 million people to lose their coverage by 2019 through the loss of ACA tax credits, elimination of the Medicaid expansion, and the collapse of the individual insurance market.ⁱ

A repeal of these laws without first enacting a comprehensive replacement will potentially deprive 20 million people of access to health care.ⁱⁱ The ACA and Medicaid are critical sources of health coverage for America’s traditionally underserved communities, which are the individuals and communities our organizations represent, including individuals and families living in poverty, people of color, women, immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with limited English proficiency. People of color represent 58 percent of non-elderly Medicaid enrollees.ⁱⁱⁱ The ACA has reduced the number of people without insurance to historic lows, including a reduction of 39 percent of the lowest income individuals.^{iv} The gains are particularly noteworthy for Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans. The nation and our communities cannot afford to go back to a time when they did not have access to comprehensive, affordable coverage.

One and a half million Planned Parenthood patients use Medicaid or other publicly funded programs to secure basic health services.^v In 2014, people of color comprised about 40 percent of Planned Parenthood patients.^{vi} Seventy-five percent of Planned Parenthood patients are at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level and half of their health centers are located in rural or underserved areas.^{vii} The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 390,000 women would lose access and up to 650,000 could face reduced access to preventive health care within a year if Congress were to block all Medicaid patients from seeking care at a Planned Parenthood health center.^{viii}

Based on Rep. Price's long service on the House Budget Committee and his record of consistent disregard for millions of Americans' access to health care, we urge you to oppose his confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. If you have any questions, please contact either of us or June Zeitlin, Director of Human Rights Policy, at 202-263-2852 or zeitlin@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President

ⁱ The Urban Institute, Implications of Partial Repeal of the ACA through Partial Reconciliation (Dec. 6, 2016), available at http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/86236/2001013-the-implications-of-partial-repeal-of-the-aca-through-reconciliation_0.pdf.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, New Report Details Impact of the Affordable Care Act (Dec. 13, 2016), available at <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2016/12/13/new-report-details-impact-affordable-careact.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kaiser Family Foundation, Medicaid Coverage Rates for the Nonelderly by Race/Ethnicity: 2015, available at <http://kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/rate-by-raceethnicity-3/?currentTimeframe=0>.

^{iv} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Affordable Care Act Has Led to Historic, Widespread Increase in Health Insurance Coverage, pp. 2, 4 (Sept. 29, 2016), available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/207946/ACAHistoricIncreaseCoverage.pdf>.

^v Planned Parenthood Action Fund Press Release, "Volunteers Rally Around Planned Parenthood As Congressional Defund Fight Nears" (Jan. 5, 2017), available at <https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/pressroom/volunteers-rally-around-plannedparenthood-as-congressional-defund-fight-nears>.

^{vi} Planned Parenthood, This is Who We Are, (July 11, 2016), available at https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/6814/6833/9709/20160711_FS_General_d1.pdf.

^{vii} Planned Parenthood, The Urgent Need for Planned Parenthood Health Centers (Dec. 7, 2016), available at https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/4314/8183/5009/20161207_Defunding_fs_d01_1.pdf.

^{viii} Figures extrapolated from Congressional Budget Office, Estimate: H.R. 3134 Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015 (Sept. 16, 2015), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/costestimate/hr3134.pdf>.