



June 13, 2017

Oppose H.R. 2581, the “Verify First Act of 2017”

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, I am writing in opposition to H.R. 2581, the “Verify First Act of 2017.” This legislation is based on a faulty premise about immigrants unlawfully obtaining certain health care subsidies, and its enactment would endanger public health. I urge you to vote against it.

H.R. 2581 would amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), as well as the proposed “American Health Care Act,” to prevent any health insurance marketplace enrollee from obtaining premium tax credits until any questions about their immigration or citizenship status have been fully resolved. The author of H.R. 2581 has alleged that approximately 500,000 undocumented immigrants have obtained premium tax credits since the ACA was first implemented. This allegation is based on a misinterpretation of a 2016 report by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The report in question found that 500,000 people who received premium credits were later disqualified because their citizenship or immigration status could not be verified. But these disqualifications occurred at a time when there were significant problems with the verification process, so the statistic sheds little light on how many of the individuals in question were actually undocumented immigrants. Given that very few undocumented immigrants wish to draw much attention to themselves, especially on the record to federal agencies, they are highly unlikely to sign up for ACA coverage or the associated tax premium benefits.

While there have been significant improvements in the verification process, resulting in far fewer enrollees being disqualified for failure to establish citizenship or immigration status, there are still many people – more often citizens than immigrants – who face delays in establishing their eligibility for insurance coverage under the ACA due to widespread errors in Social Security databases. Because the overwhelming majority of enrollees in the marketplace rely on premium tax credits to help them pay for their insurance premiums, any delays in those benefits are highly likely to result in delays in coverage, with potentially serious consequences.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote against H.R. 2581. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either me or Rob Randhava, Senior Counsel, at (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,

Vanita Gupta
President & CEO

Officers

Chair

Judith L. Lichtman
National Partnership for
Women & Families

Vice Chairs

Jacqueline Pata
National Congress of American Indians
Thomas A. Saenz

Mexican American Legal
Defense and Educational Fund
Hillary Shelton

Secretary

Jo Ann Jenkins
AARP

Treasurer

Lee A. Saunders
American Federation of State,
County & Municipal Employees

Board of Directors

Helena Berger
American Association of
People with Disabilities

Cornell William Brooks
NAACP

Kristen Clarke
Lawyers' Committee for
Civil Rights Under Law

Lily Eskelsen Garcia
National Education Association
Marcia D. Greenberger

National Women's Law Center
Chad Griffin
Human Rights Campaign

Wylecia Wiggs Harris
League of Women Voters of the
United States

Mary Kay Henry
Service Employees International Union
Mark Hopkins

AAUW
Sherrilyn Ifill
NAACP Legal Defense and
Educational Fund, Inc.

Michael B. Keegan
People for the American Way
Samer E. Khalaf

American-Arab
Anti-Discrimination Committee
Marc Morial

National Urban League
Janet Murguía
National Council of La Raza

Debra L. Ness
National Partnership for
Women & Families

Stephanie Nitahara
Japanese American Citizens League
Terry O'Neill

National Organization for Women
Rabbi Jonah Pesner
Religious Action Center

Of Reform Judaism
Anthony Romero
American Civil Liberties Union

Shanna Smith
National Fair Housing Alliance
Richard L. Trumka

AFL-CIO
Randi Weingarten
American Federation of Teachers

Dennis Williams
International Union, UAW
John C. Yang

Asian Americans Advancing Justice |
AAJC

Policy and Enforcement

Committee Chair

Michael Lieberman
Anti-Defamation League

President & CEO

Vanita Gupta