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September 20, 2021

Dear Representative,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 220 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, and the 30 organizations listed below, we write to reiterate our strong support for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce's proposal which provides a permanent and comprehensive approach to closing the Medicaid coverage gap. We now urge your support for including this package as reported from the Energy and Commerce Committee in the forthcoming reconciliation package. This is a top priority for the civil and human rights community and we applaud Chairman Pallone and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce for their work to address this critical issue.

As you know, closing this gap would provide coverage for the first time to about 2.2 million people living below the poverty line¹ in the 12 states² that have refused to take up the option to expand Medicaid to cover people with low incomes. Despite substantial federal incentives to do so, including the added incentives in the American Rescue Plan Act passed earlier this year, none of these states, many of which are in the South, have taken steps to implement the expansion. As a result, people with incomes below the poverty line in these states continue to have no access to health coverage. Black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Native American individuals make up over 60 percent of the 2.2 million people who remain uninsured without a pathway to accessing health care coverage.³ Providing Medicaid coverage now would be a huge step toward making health equity a reality for these communities.

Access to health care is a civil and human right. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified systemic pre-existing inequities in health care, with deadly consequences for many Black, Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Native American people. We believe this key civil rights issue must be remedied by a comprehensive and permanent solution to close the coverage gap such as the proposal that Chairman Pallone and the Committee on Energy and Commerce have approved. We thank Chairman Pallone and the Committee for their efforts to address this critical issue and we call on all members of Congress to support this provision

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/federal-action-needed-to-close-medicaid-coverage-gap-extend-coverage-to-22-million>.

² Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

³ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/closing-medicaid-coverage-gap-would-help-diverse-group-and-narrow-racial>



to permanently close the Medicaid coverage gap in the upcoming reconciliation package. Please contact June Zeitlin, senior advisor, at zeitlin@civilrights.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
African American Health Alliance
American Kidney Fund
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Black Women's Health Imperative
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Law and Social Policy
Coalition of Labor Union Women, AFL-CIO
Community Catalyst
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Epilepsy Foundation
Faith in Public Life
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights Campaign
MomsRising
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Employment Law Project
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Immigration Law Center
National WIC Association
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Protect Our Care
REDC Consortium
RESULTS
Southern Poverty Law Center
Spina Bifida Association
Union for Reform Judaism
Whitman-Walker Institute