

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

cc: Members of the United States House of Representatives, Members of the United States Senate

June 24, 2021

Dear President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Chairman Pallone, Chairman Wyden and Members of the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate:

We represent the 12 states that have not yet expanded Medicaid, and today we write to urge Congress to pursue a direct coverage option for low-income individuals in non-expansion states in the forthcoming recovery legislation. Our families, friends, and neighbors can't wait any longer for health care.

The undersigned organizations lead efforts to advance health equity and racial justice across Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

We are grateful for your leadership on the American Rescue Plan Act, particularly for key provisions that incentivize states to expand Medicaid and make health coverage more affordable for Americans. These provisions represent an important step towards health equity.

Yet, more needs to be done. Medicaid expansion extended quality health coverage to Americans who make too little to purchase a plan on the marketplace but too much to qualify for traditional state Medicaid.

However, with twelve states still refusing to expand Medicaid—eight of them in the South—over two million uninsured poor adults have been left in the Medicaid coverage gap, with no realistic access to health coverage. Across our states, more than 55% of these adults are Black, Hispanic, or Asian. That figure reaches as high as 72% in some states.

Our residents—especially people of color—are being denied the right, benefits, and dignity of healthcare coverage granted to Americans in 38 other states, a right that Congress fully intended when it expanded Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act.

Expansion states have made the greatest progress in narrowing racial gaps in health outcomes. They see fewer maternal deaths for Black and Hispanic women. And in rural communities, expansion has helped sustain struggling hospitals in areas that already experience sparse access to health care facilities.

A Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of over 400 studies found that Medicaid expansion saves lives, helps states and their hospitals save money, and improves people's health and well-being. Those benefits should not be denied to Americans *simply because of where they live*—especially not in regions that already bear long, enduring legacies of structural racism and violence.

State leaders continue to block the path forward for expansion despite additional federal incentives, upholding deeply politicized tensions over the will of their constituents while exacerbating health inequities in our communities.

Without bold, federal action in the economic recovery package, communities of color in our states could be left waiting another decade or more for access to basic, life-saving health coverage. Congress has a brief window to act. Now is the time.

America can't recover if all Americans aren't covered. We can't thrive as a nation if some communities continue to suffer. We can't continue to allow state leaders to stand in the way of the health and well-being of millions of Americans.

Our communities are counting on your leadership to ensure all Americans have access to quality, affordable health coverage by including a direct, comprehensive coverage option in recovery legislation.

We remain ready to work with you to meet this goal and would be eager to continue this discussion.

Sincerely,

9 to 5 Atlanta
1199 Florida
A Better Balance
ACLU of Mississippi
Action NC
Advocacy House Services, Inc
Advocates for Responsible Care
Alabama Arise
Alabama Black Women's Roundtable
Alabama Child Health Improvement alliance
Alabama Faith Council
Alabama Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival
Alabama Rare
Alachua County Labor Coalition
Allegany Franciscan Ministries
Allergy & Asthma Network

American Association of University Women (AAUW), Georgia Chapter
American Cancer Society, Georgia
American Diabetes Association, Georgia
American Heart Association, Georgia
American Institute of Dental Public Health
American Lung Association, Georgia
Amity Medical Group
Anti-Defamation League (Tzedek Georgia)
Athens for Everyone
Atlanta Community Food Bank
Atlanta Jobs with Justice
Autism Society of Texas
Avenue
B. Graham Consulting
Better Wyoming
BirthWell Partners Community Doula Project
Black Voters Matter
Broward for Progress
Cairn Health, Inc.
Cancer Recovery Group
Carolina Jews for Justice
Catalyst Miami
Center for Black Women's Wellness
Center for Civic & Public Policy Improvement
Center for Urban Transformation
Central Outreach and Advocacy Center
Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy
Children First
Children's Defense Fund - Texas
Children's Defense Fund Southern Regional Office
Church & Society Committee, Anniston First United Methodist Church
Circle of Friends Task Force
Citizen Action of Wisconsin
Citizen Coalition
Coalition for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
Coalition for Health Care of NC
Coalition for the People's Agenda
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Committee of Interns and Residents SEIU
Community Enabler
Community Family Centers
Community Health Council of Wyandotte County
Cover Alabama
Democratic Disability Caucus of Florida
Doctors Fighting Covid, LLC
Doctors for America - Texas
Doctors for America, Georgia Chapter
Down Home North Carolina

Edgehill United Methodist Church
El Centro, Inc.
Emory University, Social Medicine Program
Equality State Policy Center
Every Texan
Families First
Feminist Women's Health Center
Fiedler on the Roof Construction
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin Social Action Committee
Florida Health Justice Project
Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
Florida Policy Institute
Florida Rising
Florida Voices for Health
Fort Bend Family Health Center, Inc. dba AccessHealth
Foundation for the Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming
Georgia Academy of Family Physicians
Georgia Budget & Policy Institute
Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
Georgia Council on Substance Abuse
Georgia Equality
Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center
Georgia Organics
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Georgia Society for Public Health Education
Georgia Supportive Housing Association
Georgia WAND
Georgia Watch
Georgians for a Healthy Future
Greater Birmingham Ministries
Haitian Neighborhood Center, Sant La
Harris Allen Group LLC
Health and Justice Advocacy Network
Healthcare for the Homeless - Houston
HealthSTAT
Healthy Wyoming
Hemophilia of Georgia
Hispanic Health Coalition of Georgia
Hispanic Unity of Florida, Inc.
Hometown Action
Hispanic Unity of Florida, Inc.
Indivisible Georgia Coalition
Interfaith Children's Movement
International Pain Foundation
Jewish Community Relations Council
Jewish Community Relations Council of Atlanta
Jewish Democratic Women's Salon
Kansas Action for Children

Kansas Appleseed
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Kansas Health Foundation
Kansas Interfaith Action
Kansas Mental Health Coalition
Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice Florida
League of Women Voters, Georgia
Mainstream Coalition
Mental Health America of Georgia
Mercy Care
Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity
Mi Familia Vota Education Fund
Miami Workers Center
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Health Advocacy Program
Mississippi Votes
Moms Rising
Montgomery County (Texas) Democratic Party
MS Black Women's Roundtable
NAACP Branch 56AA-B/Cookeville-Putnam Co., TN
NAMI Tennessee (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas
National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter
National Association of Social Workers-Mississippi Chapter
National Congress of Black Women, Inc - Orlando Chapter
National Domestic Worker's Alliance, Atlanta chapter
National Marrow Donor Program/Be The Match
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
NC AIDS Action Network
NC Child
NC Justice Center
Network of Behavioral Health Providers
Neverland designs
New Hope and Love Community Church
North Carolina Council of Churches
Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Alabama
Nurture KC
Nurture the Next
Partnership For Southern Equity Just Energy Academy
Physicians for a National Health Program, Georgia chapter
Planned Parenthood South Atlantic
Planned Parenthood Southeast
Presbyterians for a Better Georgia
ProGeorgia
Protect Our Care Georgia
Proyecto Azteca
Rx within Reach Georgia coalition

Sankofa Strides
SickOfItTX
SisterReach
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Southern Christian Coalition
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative
Southwest Georgia Project
SOWEGA Rising
SPARK RJ
SPLC Action Fund
Step Up Savannah
Tennessee Disability Coalition
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
Tennessee Justice Center
Texans Care for Children
Texas Oral Health Coalition
Texas Parent to Parent
Texas Poor People's Campaign
The Afiya Center
The Disabilities Leadership Coalition of Alabama
The Healing Trust
The North Texas Alliance to Reduce Unintended Pregnancy in Teens
The Progressive Democrats of Orange County
The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham
Therapy Services LLC
Trinity Behavioral Associates
United Methodist Health Ministry Fund
United Way of Greater Topeka
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas
United Way of Tarrant County
Unity Wellness Center
Vecino Health Centers
Voices for Georgia's Children
Western North Carolina AIDS Project
Wilco Justice Alliance (Williamson County, TX)
Wings Across Alabama
Women Engaged
Women for Kansas
Wyoming Community Foundation
Wyoming Equality
Wyoming Interfaith Network
Wyoming Medical Society
Wyoming Rising
YMCA of Greater Birmingham
Young Invincibles
YWCA Central Alabama
YWCA of Greater Atlanta