



# SOUTHERNERS *for* MEDICAID EXPANSION

Dear Democratic Senators,

We, the [Southerners for Medicaid Expansion coalition](#), lead health equity movements across the Southern states that have not expanded Medicaid. We are joined by nearly 400 organizations: advocates from non-expansion states and leaders for health and racial equity across the nation.

**We are urging you to prioritize the permanent and comprehensive Medicaid “coverage gap” policy outlined in the House Energy and Commerce Committee reconciliation bill.**

Closing the coverage gap would mean that over two million uninsured Americans—most of them Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Asian, all of whom live below the poverty line—could finally get health coverage. This is the only health care policy in the Build Back Better Act that directs resources specifically to low-income Americans, 60% of whom are people of color, who have no other pathway to coverage. **We ask you to count it among your *highest* health care priorities.**

**We cannot ask Americans to keep waiting for this basic human right—nor can we settle for a solution that will lapse in a few years or leave some Americans behind. That is why our organizations urge you to support the House’s permanent and comprehensive policy.**

**This is not just about health care. It is a matter of racial justice.**

The legacy of slavery has always been reflected in the design of Medicaid—in who has received it, and who hasn’t. While its sister program, Medicare, was created at the federal level to reach every senior in America, Medicaid was a concession made to former slave states.<sup>1</sup> Instead of being universal, it let states decide whether to participate and who could and could not get coverage. Southern states went out of their way to [disqualify](#) as many Black Americans as they could, an agenda reflected in their Medicaid policies to this day. It is no coincidence that eight of the twelve non-expansion states are former slave states.

This is why the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights has [called](#) the coverage gap a “test of [Congress’] commitment to racial equity.” It’s why leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Hispanic Caucus [wrote](#) that closing the coverage gap quickly, permanently, and comprehensively is “one of the single most important steps” we can take to address racial inequities in health care. And it’s why Black leaders from Stacey Abrams to Rev. Barber of the Poor People’s Campaign have joined our call.

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<sup>1</sup> David Barton Smith, “Civil Rights and Medicare: Historical Convergence and Continuing Legacy,” in *Medicare and Medicaid at 50: America’s Entitlement Programs in the Age of Affordable Care*, ed. by Cohen, Colby, Wailoo, and Zelizer, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

The Affordable Care Act—championed by so many Democratic leaders—intended to correct this injustice by expanding Medicaid to every low-income American regardless of where they lived. But since Southern states successfully brought *NFIB v. Sebelius* to the Supreme Court, Medicaid expansion has been left up to the states.

After nearly a decade of fighting for Medicaid expansion, we know the political landscapes of our states all too well. We know that to finally fulfill the promise of the ACA, we will need bold action from Congress.

**That is why we are urging you to correct this deep, historic injustice by closing the coverage gap once and for all.** Congress may not have another chance to do so for years, if not decades. In that time, tens of thousands more low-income people of color will die from treatable illnesses and millions more will suffer. The risk is too great.

We are grateful to you and your colleagues for your leadership on this bill, and we are eager to work with you in the coming weeks to close the Medicaid gap once and for all.

Sincerely,

Southerners for Medicaid Expansion Coalition

#Impact

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

A VOICE for the Reduction of Poverty in Nashville and Beyond

AARP

ABC for Health Inc.

ACA Consumer Advocacy

ACCESS

ACLC

Action NC

ADAPT of Texas

Advocates for Responsible Care (ARxC)

African Communities Together

AIDS Alabama

AIDS Foundation Chicago

AIDS Services Coalition

Alabama Academy of Family Physicians

Alabama Arise

Alabama League of Women Voters

Alabama Primary Health Care Association

Alabama Solutions

Alianza for Progress

Alianza for Progress

Allegany Franciscan Ministries

Allergy & Asthma Network

Alliance for a Healthy Kansas

Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness

American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence

American Association on Health & Disability

American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi  
American Medical Student Association  
Appleseed Foundation  
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)  
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families  
ASSOCIATION FOR AMBULATORY BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE  
Atlanta Nurse Practitioners  
Autism Society of Texas  
BAMA Kids, Inc./SRBWI  
Bay Area Women Coalition, Inc.  
Be a Hero  
Bend the Arc South Florida  
Better Wyoming  
BirthWell Partners Community Doula Project  
Black Children's Institute of Tennessee  
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center  
Brevard County FL Leadership Action Team  
Broward for Progress  
Broward Healthy Start Coalition  
C4 Innovations  
C4 Recovery Foundation  
California Black Women's Health Project  
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
California School-Based Health Alliance  
Castleberry Development Rec. Center  
Catalyst Miami  
Center for Civic and Public Policy Improvement (CCPPI)  
Center for Health Progress  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center on Halsted  
Centering Healthcare Institute  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Central Florida Jobs with Justice  
Centro de Comunidad y Justicia  
Children First  
Children's Action Alliance  
Children's Defense Fund - Texas  
Children's Defense Fund's Southern Regional Office  
Children's Services Council of Broward County  
Church & Society, Anniston First United Methodist Church  
Church Women United Chapel Hill-Carrboro Unit  
Church Women United, Raleigh-Wake Unit  
Circular Congregational Church, Charleston, SC  
Citizen Action of Wisconsin  
City of Leland / Leland Southern Rural Black Women Initiative, LLC  
CitySquare  
Coalition for Health Care of NC

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Colorado Center on Law and Policy  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
Colors+  
Community Catalyst  
Community Education Group  
Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama  
Consumers for Affordable Health Care  
Cover Texas Now  
Debs-Jones-Institute  
Democratic Disability Caucus of Florida  
Dillon Joyce Ltd  
Disability Rights and Resources  
Diversity Collective Ventura County  
Doctors for America  
Down Home North Carolina  
Drug Policy Alliance  
East Texas Human Needs Network  
Easterseals  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
El Pueblo  
Elite Lindenite Organization, Inc.  
Equality State Policy Center  
Every Texan, (formerly CPPP)  
Faith in Florida  
Faith in New Jersey  
Faith in New York  
Faith in Public Life  
Families USA  
Family to Family Network  
Family Voices NJ  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Farmworker Justice  
Fayetteville Police Accountability Community Taskforce  
Feeding Texas  
Feminist Women's Health Center  
FLARA (Florida Alliance for Retired Americans)  
Florida Center for Fiscal and Economic Policy  
Florida Coalition on Black Civic Participation  
Florida Council of Churches  
Florida Health Justice Project  
Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition  
Florida People's Advocacy Center  
Florida Policy Institute  
Florida Voices for Health  
Floridians For Health Care; Florida Policy Institutr  
Fortaleza

FOWE/ ALABAMA BLACK WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE  
Fresh Start Apostolic Fellowship  
Fresh Start Global Outreach Ministries  
Georgia Budget and Policy Institute  
Georgia Equality  
Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center  
Georgia Women (And Those Who Stand With Us)  
Georgians for a Healthy Future  
Grace Presbyterian Church  
Greater Birmingham Ministries  
Greater WI Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.  
Green Careers Dallas  
Greensboro Housing Coalition  
Health Access CA  
Health Care For All (Massachusetts)  
Health Care Voices  
Healthcare For All - South Carolina  
Healthy Florida  
Healthy Schools Campaign  
Healthy Wyoming  
Helping Hands Community Outreach Services  
Hispanic Federation  
Hispanic Services Council, Inc.  
HIV Medicine Association  
Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky  
Hometown Action  
Hoosier Action  
Houston Area Women's Center  
IDid Creations, Inc.  
Independent Living Center of Mobile  
Indivisible Austin  
Indivisible Georgia Coalition  
Indivisible Marching Buddies of Atlanta  
Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health  
Interfaith Children's Movement  
International Museum of Muslim Cultures  
International Valley Health Institute  
Jackson District WHOMS AME Zion Church  
Jackson State University  
Jefferson District CED  
Jersey City Connections DBA Hudson Pride Center  
Jewish Community Relations Council  
Jewish Democratic Womens Salon  
Jewish Family Service Houston  
Jolt Action  
Kansas Action for Children  
Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, Inc.  
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Kansas Interfaith Action  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Kentucky Voices for Health  
Kids Forward  
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center  
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)  
Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice Florida  
Latino Leadership, Inc.  
LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's Network  
League of Women Voters of N.C.  
Legal Action Center  
Legal Aid Service of Broward County, Inc.  
Legal Council for Health Justice  
Louisiana Budget Project  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
Lutherans Engaging in Asvocracy Minisrty  
LWVPBC  
Maine Equal Justice  
Marengo County Retired Education Employees Association  
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative  
Massachussets ME/CFS and FM Association  
Medicaid Matters New York  
Medical Advocacy & Outreach  
Mental Health America of Greater Dallas  
Mercy Care  
Metro New York Health Care for All  
Miami Dade League of Women Voters  
Miami Workers Center  
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
Mississippi Center for Justice  
Mississippi Families for Kids  
Mississippi Health Advocacy Program  
Mississippi Human Services Coalition  
Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative  
Mississippi State Conference NAACP  
Mississippi United Methodist Conference CUIR  
Missouri Health Care for All  
Mobile District AME Zion Church WHOMS  
Mobile District AMEZ Church  
MomsRising  
Montana Women Vote  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
MS Black Women's Roundtable  
Multicultural Development Institute, Inc.  
NAACP  
NAMI Central Texas  
NAMI Kansas

NAMI Texas of Palestine  
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina  
Nashville Jewish Social Justice Roundtable  
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of Social Workers - Florida  
National Association of Social Workers - Mississippi Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter  
National Council of Urban Indian Health  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National MS Society  
National Network for Arab American Communities  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
NBB Mentoring  
NC Child  
NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
NC National Organization for Women  
NC Poor People's Campaign  
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Haven Pride Center  
New Hope Housing  
New Jersey Appleseed Public Interest Law Center  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Policy Perspective  
New Virginia Majority  
No More Silence Foundation  
North Carolina AIDS Action Network  
North Carolina Asian Americans Together  
North Carolina Justice Center  
North Texas Area Community Health Center  
Northwest Health Law Advocates  
Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Alabama  
Office of the County Judge - Dallas County  
Oklahoma Policy Institute  
One Health Literacy Organization  
one-n-ten  
OutFront Kalamazoo  
Outstanding Kids  
Palm Beach Groves  
Panhandle Community Services  
Partnership to End Addiction  
Pasadena Health Center  
Pennsylvania Health Access Network  
People First Of Alabama  
Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas  
PGH Equality Center

Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative  
Pride Center of Staten Island  
Pride Community Center, Inc  
Protect Our Care  
Protect Our Healthcare Coalition RI  
Proyecto Azteca  
Proyecto Juan Diego Inc.,  
Resource Center  
Restored Citizens  
RESULTS  
Root & Rebound  
Sacramento LGBT Community Center  
Salvation and Social Justice  
Sant La, Haitian Neighborhood Center  
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
Shriver Center on Poverty Law  
Sick Of It Texas Campaign  
Sisters 2 Sisters of Wilcox County Inc  
Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce  
South Florida Zioness  
Southeast Alabama AHEC  
Southern Echo Inc.  
Southern Economic Advancement Project  
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative  
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice  
Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center  
Southern Vision Alliance  
SOWEGA Rising  
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network  
Spirit in Action  
SRBW Human Rights Commission Voices for Arcola  
St. Johns County Legal Aid  
Step Up Savannah  
Susan G. Komen  
Tahirih Justice Center - Houston  
TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities)  
Tennessee Disability Coalition  
Tennessee Health Care Campaign  
Tennessee Hemophilia & Bleeding Disorders Foundation  
Tennessee Justice Center  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Academy of Family Physicians  
Texas AFL-CIO  
Texas Alliance for Retired Americans  
Texas Association of Community Health Plans  
Texas Data Quality Coalition



Texas Impact  
Texas Organizing Project  
Texas Parent to Parent  
Texas Pediatric Society, the Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatricians  
The Afiya Center  
The AIDS Institute  
The Arc of Alabama  
The Arc of the United States  
The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection  
The Common Ground Project  
The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis  
The Connecticut Oral Health Initiative, Inc.  
The Family Healthcare Foundation  
The Good Life Outcomes program, at Change Happens! (Houston, TX)  
The Kennedy Forum  
The Knights & Orchids Society  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Thresholds  
Thrive Allen County  
Through the Archway  
UnidosUS  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, SC  
United Community Services of Johnson County  
United for Respect  
United Way for Greater Austin  
United Way of Greenville County  
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas  
United Way of Southern Cameron County  
United Way of Tarrant County  
United Way Suncoast  
United Ways of Texas  
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Utah Health Policy Project  
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy  
Virginia Organizing  
VOA Southeast  
Wellness Pointe  
West Virginians for Affordable Health Care  
WestCare Foundation  
WH&OM Society  
Wings Of DELIVERANCE  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice  
Women for Kansas  
Women for Progress of MS, Inc.  
Women of Purpose Global Ministries  
Women's Alliance of SWFL

Wyoming Community Foundation  
Wyoming Education Association - Retired  
Wyoming Medical Society  
Wyoming Rising  
Wyoming Women's Action Network  
YMCA of Birmingham  
Young Invincibles

Additional signatories after letter officially sent on September 17, 2021:

Alabama Poor People's Campaign  
Asian Resources, Inc  
CenterLink  
Children's Action Alliance  
Coalicion de Lideres Latinos-CLILA  
Coalition for a Strong Tennessee  
Disability Rights and Resources  
EDGE NJ  
Greater Birmingham Ministries  
Houston Area Women's Center  
Jacksonville Urban League  
Kennedy-Satcher Center for Mental Health Equity  
LEAP  
Magnolia Medical Foundation  
Mississippi Urban League  
Mississippi Votes  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
Nurture the Next  
One Voice, Inc.  
Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN, Inc.)  
Palmetto Project  
Restaurant Opportunities Center MS  
Six Dimensions  
United Methodist Health Ministry Fund  
Youth OUTright WNC