



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.¹ 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.

¹ 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 Advocacy Ministry
LWVPBC
Maine Equal Justice
Marengo County Retired Education Employees Association
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative
Massachusetts 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
The Jolley Foundation, Greenville SC
United Methodist Health Ministry Fund
Youth OUTright WNC