



SOUTHERNERS *for* MEDICAID EXPANSION

December 21, 2021

Dear Leader Schumer,

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to secure passage of the Build Back Better Act. **Today we write on behalf of the [Southerners for Medicaid Expansion coalition](#) which represents the millions of uninsured people across the South, to implore you to ensure that any final version of the Build Back Better package includes a provision to close the coverage gap.**

As you know, the Medicaid coverage gap accounts for over 2 million poor Americans, the large majority of whom are people of color, who remain without a pathway to coverage 10 years after the passage of the ACA. Every year that the coverage gap exists more than [7,000 Americans lose their lives](#) and countless more suffer daily without an ability to take care of their chronic health needs. **We are including a [letter from Gracie Camarena](#) who is watching her sister slowly die in front of her because she cannot get access to basic healthcare for her diabetes.**

Lack of access to health care coverage underpins the deep racial inequities in our healthcare system that result in devastatingly high and disparate maternal and infant mortality rates for black women and children. This is why the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights have joined [others](#) in [calling](#) the coverage gap a “test of [Congress’] commitment to racial equity.” **We cannot move forward yet again in this country in a way that leaves poor Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Asian, communities completely out of the system.** Without Congressional action to close the coverage gap in the BBB, these communities – which have been the backbone of our essential workforce throughout the COVID-19 pandemic – could be left without coverage for many years to come.

We hope that you will stand with us in our resolve to stop the needless loss of life and suffering caused by the Medicaid coverage gap, and work to ensure the final BBB package includes this life-saving fix that will help millions of Americans.

For your reference we have included our [previous letter](#) to Senate Democrats on this issue. We stand ready to work with you and appreciate your attention to this critical issue.

The Southerners for Medicaid Expansion Coalition