

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

Thank you for your leadership championing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and shepherding the Build Back Better package that included key provisions to build on the promise of the ACA. As leading members of the Southerners for Medicaid Expansion coalition—and as organizations that lead health equity coalitions across our eight Southern states—we especially want to thank you for championing a provision to close the Medicaid coverage gap.

As discussions continue on the upcoming economic reconciliation legislation, we urge you to ensure it includes an ACA package with BOTH the extension of the American Rescue Plan Act's enhanced Advanced Premium Tax Credits (APTCs) AND the critically important provision to close the Medicaid coverage gap.

We stand ready to work with you to achieve this goal. People in the coverage gap are dying from treatable illnesses. Black mothers and Black babies are dying. Many more are rationing their medication, delaying care, and getting by with devastating impacts to the length and quality of their lives. The majority of Americans in the coverage gap are Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian American, and Pacific Islander, and this issue disproportionately impacts women. Closing the coverage gap is the greatest step we can take to tackle racial disparities in maternal mortality, premature deaths, and high rates of medical debt.

It is critical that the provisions to close the coverage gap and extend the enhanced APTCs move together. This is the only way to ensure that every American has an affordable pathway to health coverage, especially as the Public Health Emergency (PHE) comes to an end. Without the enhanced APTCs, millions will see their premiums skyrocket at the end of the year, and an estimated three million will lose their coverage all together because they can no longer afford their health plans. Without a fix to the coverage gap, millions of Americans will still have **no** pathway to basic, affordable care, and many more will lose the vital Medicaid coverage they had through the PHE.

As we work to build on the progress of the ACA, we cannot move forward in a way that continues to leave low-income Black and brown Americans behind. We need bold Congressional action to bring them into our health care system. Unless Congress closes the Medicaid coverage gap, Americans—who have been the backbone of our essential workforce during and long before the COVID-19 pandemic—could be left with zero affordable health care options for years to come.

We appreciate your work to fulfill the promise of the ACA and urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that an extension of the enhanced APTCs and closure of the Medicaid coverage gap move together.

Thank you, and we remain eager to work with you to make this a reality.

Sincerely,

The Southerners for Medicaid Expansion Coalition:

Alabama Arise

Children's Defense Fund-Texas

Every Texan

Florida Health Justice Project

Florida Voices for Health

Florida Policy Institute

Georgians for a Healthy Future

Mississippi Center for Justice

North Carolina Justice Center

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Tennessee Health Care Campaign

Tennessee Justice Center