Dear Majority Leader Schumer,

We, the Southerners for Medicaid Expansion coalition, urge you to ensure any final agreement on an economic reconciliation package includes a provision to close the Medicaid coverage gap. We are joined by hundreds of health equity organizations across the country from states that have not expanded Medicaid.

A few million of our nation’s poorest and sickest Americans have no other pathway to affordable health care, and they need Congress to act now. Most of them are Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian American, and Pacific Islanders. Closing the Medicaid coverage gap is a necessary, moral imperative to fulfill the promise of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and address racial equity in our health system.

The stakes are enormous. 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. It’s no coincidence that the regions in our nation with the greatest racial disparities in maternal mortality, the highest rates of medical debt, and the lowest life expectancy are all located in non-expansion states.

We appreciate your tenacious work championing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and fighting to “establish affordable healthcare as a basic right of every American.” At its core, the ACA promised that no matter who we are, how much we make, or where we live, every American deserves access to health care coverage. But due to NFIB v. Sebelius and states’ politically entrenched refusal to expand Medicaid, the ACA has failed to deliver this promise for millions of mostly Black and brown Americans in the coverage gap.

Two years ago, when you introduced the Economic Justice Act—a bill intended to underscore our nation’s commitment to tackling systemic racism—you said, “Long before the pandemic, long before this recession, long before [2020’s] protests, structural inequalities have persisted in health care and housing, the economy and education...We must confront them with lasting, meaningful solutions that tear down economic and social barriers, and reinvest in historically underserved communities.”

There are few solutions more lasting and meaningful in our healthcare system today than closing the Medicaid coverage gap. Congress must finish the work of the ACA and take this resounding step towards racial justice.
Now is the time. We will not have another chance for years to come to correct this profound injustice in the design of our healthcare system. Closing the Medicaid coverage gap is key to your stated goal of promoting economic and racial justice. We need your leadership, and we need it now.

We look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months to deliver on the promise of the ACA and invite further conversation on this issue.

Sincerely,

9to5 Georgia
A Voice for the Reduction of Poverty Coalition
Action NC
African American Clergy Collective of TN
AIDS Alabama South
Alabama Arise
Alabama Black Women's Roundtable
Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program
Alabama Harm Reduction Coalition
Alabama Primary Health Care Association
Alabama Rare
Alabama State Nurses Association
Allegany Franciscan Ministries
Alliance for a Healthy Kansas
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Alabama
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Georgia
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Kansas
Autism Society of Texas
Birmingham AIDS Outreach
BirthWell Partners Community Doula Project
Black Children's Institute of Tennessee
Black Clergy Collaborative of Memphis
Black Voters Matter Fund
Broward for Progress
Cairn Health, Inc.
Carolina Jews for Justice
Catalyst Miami
Center for Black Women's Wellness
Center for Civic and Public Policy Improvement
Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy
Children First Alabama
Children's Defense Fund-Texas
Children's Services Council of Broward County
Church & Society, Anniston First United Methodist Church
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Collaborative Solutions
Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama
Community Health & Wellness Center Inc.
Community Partners Linked Network
Cover Texas Now
COVID Survivors for Change
Democratic Disability Caucus of Florida
Down Syndrome Association of Middle TN
East Texas Human Needs Network
El Centro Hispano
Equality State Policy Center
Every Texan
Faith in Action Alabama
Faith Voices for Medicaid Expansion - Kansas
Family to Family Network
Feeding Texas
Florida Health Justice Project
Florida Policy Institute
Florida Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-FL)
Florida Voices for Health
Ford County Breastfeeding Coalition
Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
Georgia Chapter, Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP)
Georgia Equality
Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center
Georgia Watch
Georgians for a Healthy Future
Good Life Outcomes, at Change Happens!
Grace United Methodist Church
Greater Chattanooga Democratic Women's Club
Haitian Neighborhood Center, Sant La Inc.
Health Care Justice--NC
Health Students Taking Action Together
Healthy Futures of Texas
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia
Hemophilia Of Georgia
Houston Area Women's Center
Humanity House
IATSE Local 31
Indivisible Georgia Coalition
Jewish Community Relations Council
Jewish Democratic Women’s Salon of Atlanta
Johnson County NAACP
Jolt Action
Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Kansas Interfaith Action
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
League of Women Voters of Florida
League of Women Voters of Tennessee
Leland Southern Rural Black Women Initiative Human Rights Commission
Longview Wellness Center, Inc., Wellness Pointe
Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama
Medical Advocacy & Outreach Alabama
Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas
Mid South Liver Alliance
Mississippi Black Women’s Roundtable
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Health Advocacy Program
Mississippi Human Services Coalition
Mississippi Kidney Foundation
Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative
Mississippi Urban League, Inc.
NAMI Texas
Nashville Jewish Social Justice Roundtable
Nashville NAACP Health Committee
National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter
NC AIDS Action Network
NC Council of Churches
NC Justice Center
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Network of Behavioral Health Providers
New Hope Housing
New Hope Peacemaking Network
No More Silence Foundation
North Carolina Council of Churches
Nurture KC
Nurture the Next
Oral Health Kansas
Panhandle Community Services
Parents for Public Schools, Inc.
Planned Parenthood Votes! South Atlantic
Pro-Choice North Carolina
Protect Our Care Georgia
Rescuing Health
Resource Center Texas
Restaurant Opportunities Center Mississippi (ROC-MS)
Restored Citizens
Restored Citizens
RESULTS Tennessee
Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas
Sick of It Texas
SKIL Resource Center Inc Kansas
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Southern Birth Justice Network
Southern Christian Coalition
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative
Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice
SOWEGA Rising
SPLC Action Fund
Tennessee Chapter of National Association of Social Workers
Tennessee Disability Coalition
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
Tennessee Justice Center
Texans Care for Children
Texas AFL-CIO
Texas Organizing Project
Texas Parent to Parent
The 6:52 Project Foundation, Inc.
The Center for Black Health & Equity
The Healing Trust
The Knights & Orchids Society
Thrive Allen County (Kansas Cares)
TN Healthcare Campaign
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
United Community Services of Johnson County
United for Respect
United Methodist Health Ministry Fund
United Way of Broward County
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas
United Way of Southern Cameron County
United Way of Tarrant County
United Ways of Texas
Veronica's Voice
Women for Kansas
Wyoming Community Foundation
Wyoming Education Association Retired
Wyoming Women's Action Network
Young Invincibles
YWCA of Greater Atlanta
YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee
Zonta Club of Birmingham