



Dear Senator,

We represent the 12 states that have refused to expand Medicaid, and **today we write to implore you to express your strong and active support to ensure that any final agreement on a reconciliation package includes a provision to close the Medicaid coverage gap. In the wake of the *Dobbs* decision, Congress must take immediate action to ensure all women and birthing people across this country have *at minimum* access to basic health care.**

Failing to close the coverage gap would be a moral failure and an unconscionable abandonment of over two million of the poorest Americans who still have no pathway to affordable health coverage, including **more than one million predominately Black and Latino people of color, and 800,000 women of reproductive age.**

Our states are also among those that have banned or will soon ban access to abortion. We've been fighting to expand Medicaid for over a decade, and we know our states are unlikely to expand Medicaid in the foreseeable future. **This means we will soon see many women in our communities who will neither have access to abortion nor access to basic, reliable health care.**

Large gaps in coverage before and after pregnancy have painful consequences for families in our states. It's no coincidence that our states see more maternal deaths than the national average, especially for Black women.

We understand there is interest to include 12 months postpartum Medicaid coverage in the reconciliation bill. While we support this, extending postpartum care is not a replacement for closing the coverage gap. All but two non-expansion states have already extended postpartum coverage. More crucially, women deserve health care coverage throughout their lives—not just during and after their pregnancies.

Leaving the coverage gap in place means abandoning the overall health of women and parents. It means forcing people to delay critical preconception and prenatal care, locking them out of treatment for common chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension—that could put both mother and baby at risk—and leaving parents in the lurch after they celebrate their babies' first birthdays.

While continuing the American Rescue Plan's enhanced premium tax credits is essential for moderate and middle-income residents in our states, **Congress must also not leave behind the poorest Americans who have absolutely no pathway to coverage.**

Without moral and decisive action to close the coverage gap in the forthcoming reconciliation package, communities of color in our states will be left waiting another decade or more for access to basic, life-saving health insurance. You have the moral imperative and responsibility to act. Use this brief opportunity to end years of needless suffering and death and ensure our nation closes the Medicaid coverage gap.

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

Georgia Budget and Policy Institute

Georgians for a Healthy Future

Mississippi Center for Justice

North Carolina Justice Center

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Tennessee Justice Center