

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2021

RE: Permanently Close the Coverage Gap in Reconciliation to Improve the Health of our Neighbors in Non-Expansion States

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer,

Thank you for your longstanding leadership on increasing and protecting comprehensive, quality and affordable health care for so many Americans. We have taken monumental steps to improve health care for Americans, but unfortunately too many hardworking individuals and families across America are currently without coverage that would safeguard their health and their pocketbook. For too long, politicians in our states have played politics with the lives of the 2.2 million people who would qualify for Medicaid expansion.¹ As Congressional members from the 12 non-expansion states, we strongly urge you to include language to permanently close the Medicaid coverage gap in reconciliation.

We have heard from our constituents about how having quality, affordable health care would help address health and financial disparities. As members of the Tri-Caucus wrote in a letter last month, “Closing the coverage gap is one of the single most important steps we can take to reduce health inequities across the United States, as almost 60 percent of people affected by the coverage gap are Black, Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander.”² Closing the coverage gap would positively impact coverage for children. Hispanic children in non-expansion states are 2.5 times more likely to be uninsured.³ We know that getting parents covered, helps get kids covered. Low-wage workers in our states - many of whom have been on the frontlines during the Covid pandemic – will be big winners if we close the coverage gap. In Florida, for example, the most common jobs for uninsured low-wage workers are cashiers, cooks, waiters, retail salespersons and construction workers.⁴ We owe it to our hardworking, underserved and marginalized communities to fight for their health care, since so many “leaders” in their states refuse.

¹ Solomon, J. (2021, May 6). *Federal Action Needed to Close Medicaid "Coverage Gap," Extend Coverage to 2.2 Million People*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/federal-action-needed-to-close-medicaid-coverage-gap-extend-coverage-to-22-million>.

² Kelly, R.L., Clark, Y., Beatty, J., Chu, J., & Ruiz, R., Tri-Caucus Letter to Close Medicaid Coverage Gap (117AD). https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kci68orcrob34b9/AABts_W-T9L2CN8-GsJKvXjBa?dl=0&preview=Tri-Caucus+Medicaid+to+Close+Medicaid+Coverage+Gap+WH.pdf

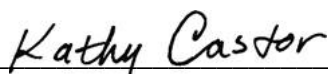
³ Whitener, K., Snider, M., & Corcoran, A. (2021, July). *Expanding Medicaid Would Help Close Coverage Gap for Latino Children and Parents*. <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Expanding-Medicaid-Would-Help-Close-Coverage-Gap-for-Latino-Children-and-Parents.pdf>

⁴ Alker, J., & Corcoran, A. (2021, June 28). *A Profile of Florida's Low-Wage Uninsured Workers*. Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center For Children and Families. <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2021/06/28/a-profile-of-floridas-low-wage-uninsured-workers/>.

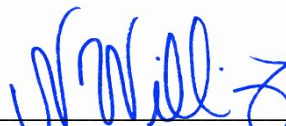
We must seize the opportunity to **take action now** to close the coverage gap by including language to do so in the upcoming reconciliation package. Just last week, a group of House members introduced a bill that would establish a Medicaid-fall back option.⁵ We could also build off the successful Affordable Care Act Marketplace or create a combination of both. Another approach many of us have joined would empower local governments to expand Medicaid coverage with the same federal resources state leaders have rejected. No matter what path is taken, we must ensure it is permanent, comprehensive and closely mirrors the unique benefits currently included in Medicaid. We must come together to develop a lasting proposal that will cover the 2.2 million Americans who have been left behind by dangerous ideology in our state capitols.

Permanently closing the coverage gap is vital to ensuring all Americans have health care, economic security and better health outcomes. We have a unique opportunity with reconciliation to finally tear down the remaining barriers to health coverage for our neighbors in non-expansion states. We stand ready to work with you to push this policy over the finish line and get all Americans covered.

Sincerely,



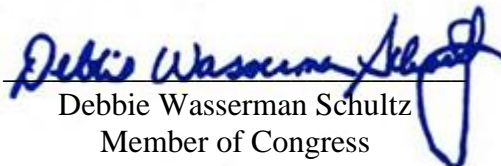
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



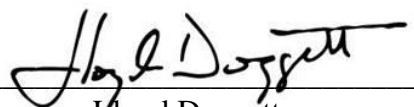
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



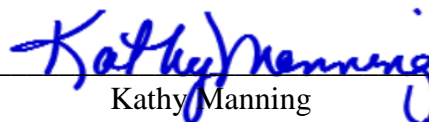
Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



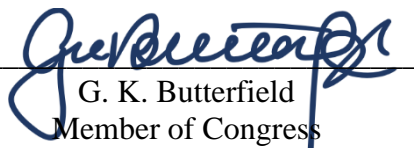
David E. Price
Member of Congress



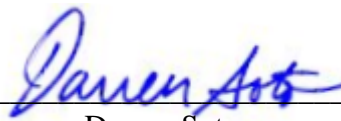
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Kathy Manning
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress

⁵ U.S. Rep. Carolyn Bourdeaux (2021, July 21). *Bourdeaux Introduces Legislation to Expand Health Care Coverage to Over Four Million Americans* [Press release]. <https://bourdeaux.house.gov/media/press-releases/bourdeaux-introduces-legislation-expand-health-care-coverage-over-four-0>.

/s/

Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress



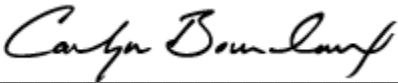
Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

/s/

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Carolyn Bourdeaux
Member of Congress



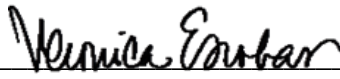
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



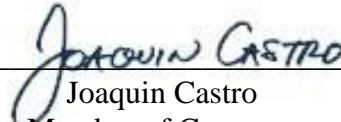
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



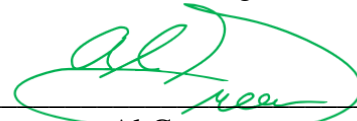
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



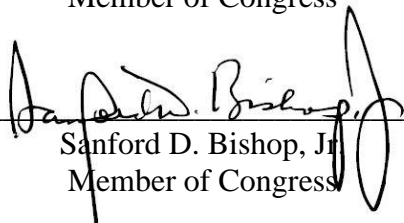
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Jim Cooper
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



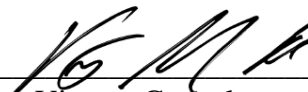
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



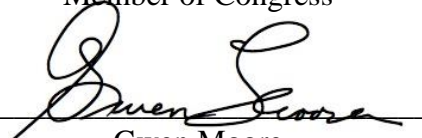
Ron Kind
Member of Congress




Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

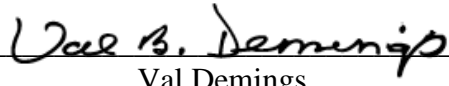


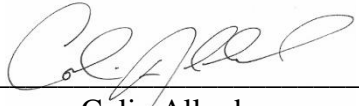
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

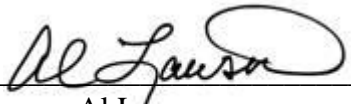


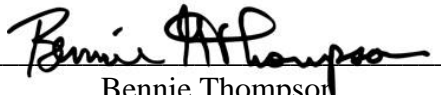
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress

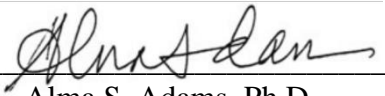

Val Demings
Member of Congress


Colin Allred
Member of Congress


Al Lawson
Member of Congress


Bennie Thompson
Member of Congress


Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress


Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

/s/
Charlie Crist
Member of Congress