

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2017

Senator Lamar Alexander
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Orrin Hatch
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Michael Enzi
379A Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander, Chairman Hatch and Chairman Enzi:

We write to request that in your capacity as the chairmen of the committees that have jurisdiction over the American Health Care Act that you schedule hearings to discuss, debate and hear testimony about the health care bill that you are currently drafting in secret.

When drafting the Affordable Care Act in 2009 and 2010, Democrats were committed to an open, transparent process that would allow Congress to thoroughly debate such a substantial piece of legislation, as well as give the American public ample opportunity to review the bill and provide input to their elected representatives.

During this process, the Senate Finance Committee held more than 50 hearings, meetings and roundtables on health reform, and spent eight days marking up the legislation – the longest markup in 22 years. The Senate HELP Committee held more than 47 hearings, meetings and roundtables and considered nearly 300 amendments during a 13-day markup. During the process, the Senate Finance Committee and Senate HELP Committee accepted 154 amendments either sponsored or cosponsored by current Republican Senators. Additionally, both committees posted their legislation online for six days before the markup, allowing stakeholders and the public time to evaluate it before any vote was taken. When the bill was considered on the Senate floor, the Senate spent 25 consecutive days in session on health reform, the second-longest consecutive session in history.

During this time, each of you expressed strong support for an open and deliberative process. Senator Enzi said, “Cutting off Senate debate and deliberation with the budget reconciliation procedure would shortchange legislation with enormous impact.”ⁱ Senator Alexander said, “I don't think people are going to feel as good about a bill that restructures one-sixth of our economy, that affects every single American's health, and the health care bill is being written behind closed doors, in the Democratic leader's office. We will see. But at least whatever emerges, we want to read the bill. We want the American people to be able to read the bill. And we want to know exactly what it costs before we go ahead.”ⁱⁱ Senator Hatch said, “It is really unbelievable. We are being asked to move forward on legislation that will reform one-sixth of the American economy and impact every American life and business without knowing what is actually in the bill.”ⁱⁱⁱ Then Representative, now Vice President Pence said, “The American people deserve time to read this. Every member of Congress ought to sign that “Let Freedom Ring” pledge that they'll commit to read this bill before they sign it, given the magnitude of what this would mean to our health care economy and to every American.”^{iv} Lastly, Leader McConnell said, “this massive piece of legislation that seeks to restructure one-sixth of our economy is being written behind closed doors without input from

anyone in an effort to jam it past, not only the Senate, but the American people before Christmas, an artificial deadline, every American will be affected by this missing bill. Every single American will be affected by this and no one will have had an opportunity to read it and to understand it.”^v

While clearly unjustified at the time, we wholeheartedly agree with the sentiments behind these statements. We ask that you heed your own advice and immediately schedule hearings on the Senate’s version of the American Health Care Act.

To assist you in scheduling a hearing, please see the list below of all hearing rooms in the Senate regardless of whether they are assigned to a Senate Committee or under the control of the Senate Rules Committee. They are:

- SDG-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building
- 106 Dirksen Senate Office Building
- 124 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Appropriations Committee)
- 138 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Appropriations Committee)
- 192 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Appropriations Committee)
- 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Finance Committee)
- 226 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Judiciary Committee)
- 342 Dirksen Senate Office Building (HSGAC Committee)
- 366 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Energy Committee)
- 406 Dirksen Senate Office Building (EPW Committee)
- 430 Dirksen Senate Office Building (HELP Committee)
- 538 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Banking Committee)
- 562 Dirksen Senate Office Building
- 604 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Budget Committee)
- 628 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Indian Affairs Committee)
- 419 Dirksen Senate Office Building (Foreign Relations Committee)
- 220 Russell Senate Office Building (Armed Services Committee)
- 236 Russell Senate Office Building (Armed Services Committee)
- 253 Russell Senate Office Building (Commerce Committee)
- 332 Russell Senate Office Building (Agriculture Committee)
- 385 Russell Senate Office Building (Rules Committee)
- 325 Russell Senate Office Building (Kennedy Caucus Room)
- 418 Russell Senate Office Building
- 428A Russell Senate Office Building
- 485 Russell Senate Office Building
- 216 Hart Senate Office Building
- 902 Hart Senate Office Building
- Senate Visitor Center 200-201
- Senate Visitor Center 202-203
- Senate Visitor Center 208-209
- Senate Visitor Center 210-212

If you schedule a hearing, we guarantee all Democratic members of the Senate HELP, Finance or Budget Committee will be in attendance at any time or place that you choose.

The American Health Care Act would affect hundreds of millions of people across the country. The 74 million Americans on Medicaid could see their care eliminated or cut, including seniors in nursing homes, children, those with substance use disorders, women, minorities, people with disabilities and many more. The 12 million people who get coverage on the individual exchange could see their premiums become dramatically more expensive. The 52 million Americans under the age of 65 with a pre-existing condition who, prior to the Affordable Care Act, would have been uninsurable could once again face the prospect of either being denied care or seeing unaffordable premiums because of their health status. Millions of men and women who rely on Planned Parenthood could be unable to get care at their trusted provider.

These Americans deserve an open and public debate over the bill. We have long referred to the Senate as the world's greatest deliberative body. We may often disagree on the issues, but this reputation is founded upon the principles of free, open and robust debate for all to see and participate in.

The American Health Care Act would fundamentally redefine health care in our country. To draft it behind closed doors and pass it without even one hearing is nothing short of legislative malpractice and a repudiation of all the Senate stands for.

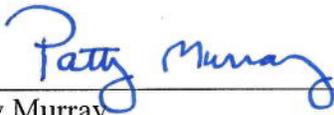
Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

CC: Vice President Mike Pence
Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell

ⁱ Statement, [4/27/09](#)

ⁱⁱ Floor Remarks, [10/5/09](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Floor Remarks, [12/12/09](#)

^{iv} Fox News On the Record, [7/28/09](#)

^v Press Conference, [12/18/09](#)