



July 12, 2017

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the over 170,000 members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge you to oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA), under which health insurance would generally cost more and cover less for most Americans. This damaging proposal would repeal portions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and limit access to health care for millions of women. The ACA has greatly improved women's access to quality, affordable health insurance and care. The BCRA would put the health, well-being, and economic security of women in jeopardy.

AAUW believes that everyone is entitled to high-quality, affordable, and accessible health care.¹ Since the enactment of the ACA, about 137 million Americans have access to preventive services without cost sharing, including 55 million women.² Fewer women of reproductive age were also uninsured as a result of the ACA.³ The number of uninsured women ages 15 to 44 years old dropped by 36 percent under the first two full years of ACA implementation.⁴ AAUW believes these positive changes underscore the need for a robust ACA.

The Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) would undermine many of these advances.

- Those with preexisting conditions would no longer be assured affordable coverage. In addition, states could change their requirements for covering Essential Health Benefits, taking us back to a time when women would again be charged more than men for the coverage they need.
- By eliminating financial assistance for women and families to purchase coverage, the BCRA would make it harder for many women to afford health insurance. Because coverage would be less affordable, fewer women and their families would be insured and many would face new cost barriers to obtaining health care.
- The Congressional Budget Office estimates that around 22 million more people would be uninsured by 2026 and 15 million more would be uninsured next year. In addition, BCRA's changes to Medicaid would mean that low-income families and on women of color lose access to essential, preventive care, and things like maternity care.⁵
- BCRA's provision to defund Planned Parenthood would mean that many women would lose access to key preventive services – including birth control. This is a full-fledged attack on women's health, particularly for low-income women and women of color. Today, nearly 4 in

10 women report that family planning centers, such as Planned Parenthood, serve as their only source of health care.⁶ Millions of people rely on Planned Parenthood to access critical preventive health services, and denying low-income women the choice of such an important access point will be devastating to public health. Coupled with the AHCA's additional restrictions on abortion care, women lose access to critical health care under this piece of legislation.

The Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) would weaken women's access to affordable, quality health coverage, and defund Planned Parenthood health centers. The Affordable Care Act has improved women's health and economic security, and AAUW opposes efforts to gut or repeal the law. AAUW also opposes any efforts that seek to weaken women's access to affordable, quality health coverage, and any attacks that endanger women's access to key health care services provided by Planned Parenthood health centers. I urge the Senator to oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act. Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record for the 115th Congress*. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7724, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Anne Hedgepeth
Interim Vice President of Public Policy and Government Relations

¹ AAUW. (June 2015). *AAUW Public Policy Program*. www.aauw.org/resource/principles-and-priorities/.

² Department of Health and Human Services. (February 12, 2016). *HHS FY 2017 Budget in Brief – CMS - PHI*. www.hhs.gov/about/budget/fy2017/budget-in-brief/cms/private-insurance-programs/index.html#coverage.

³ Guttmacher Institute. (November 17, 2016). *Uninsured Rate Among Women of Reproductive Age Has Fallen More Than One-Third Under the Affordable Care Act*. www.guttmacher.org/article/2016/11/uninsured-rate-among-women-reproductive-age-has-fallen-more-one-third-under.

⁴ Guttmacher Institute. (November 17, 2016). *Uninsured Rate Among Women of Reproductive Age Has Fallen More Than One-Third Under the Affordable Care Act*. www.guttmacher.org/article/2016/11/uninsured-rate-among-women-reproductive-age-has-fallen-more-one-third-under.

⁵ Congressional Budget Office. (June 2017). [H.R. 1628, Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/52849).

www.cbo.gov/publication/52849; Black Women's Health Imperative. (June 24, 2017). *Senate's Health Care Bill Is Bad For Black Women*. www.bwhi.org/news/2017/06/24/imperative-in-the-news/senate-s-health-care-bill-is-bad-for-black-women/

⁶ Guttmacher Institute. (March 2014). *Moving Forward: Family Planning in the Era of Health Reform*. www.guttmacher.org/report/moving-forward-family-planning-era-health-reform