



COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATS  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 8, 2015

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**Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
Hearing on “An Overdue Checkup Part II: Examining the ACA's State Insurance  
Marketplaces”**

We are here today for yet another hearing to attack the Affordable Care Act. Since the August recess, the majority of this Subcommittee’s hearings have been dedicated to undermining the law. The majority has called in the state exchanges and CMS to criticize them, and they have burdened them with massive document requests in the middle of open enrollment.

I do not mean to suggest that we should not be doing oversight of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. But what we are seeing from my Republican colleagues is not balanced oversight designed to improve the law. Instead, the majority’s efforts are simply designed to hamper implementation and undermine the Affordable Care Act regardless of the facts.

Frankly, it’s incredibly frustrating to sit here time and time again listening to my Republican colleagues lay into the Administration witnesses and criticize the efforts of their departments without any sense of perspective on the historic gains in coverage that have been achieved.

I would have hoped that by this point, nearly six years after the passage of the law, we could add a balanced perspective on where implementation of the law faces challenges, but just as importantly, where it is helping Americans lead better lives and become more productive citizens.

We should be talking about ideas to advance the mission of the law, to provide quality, affordable care to all of our constituents, or even make key fixes where appropriate. We should be holding hearings about ways to target the remaining uninsured.

As CMS will testify today, the ACA is clearly making a huge difference in the lives of millions of Americans. It is making families stronger. It is making states stronger. It is making America stronger. Yes, the law has faced challenges, but we have had many more successes that you never hear about from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

So I will take a moment to ensure that we hear about some of them in today's hearing.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, 17.6 million uninsured people have gained coverage through the law's various coverage provisions. Since the start of this year's open enrollment period on November 1, two million Americans have selected plans through the federally-facilitated exchange. More and more states are making the right decision on Medicaid expansion, which is benefitting their most vulnerable citizens as well as saving billions of dollars.

Pre-existing conditions can no longer preclude individuals from gaining health insurance. Consumers do not have to worry about losing coverage if their employment changes. Reductions in the uninsured rate mean that doctors and hospitals provides less uncompensated care, which means fewer costs are being passed along to consumers and employers who pay premiums for health coverage.

Instead of acknowledging any of these successes, my Republican colleagues insist on holding more hearings and debating more bills to undermine the law. And what's worse, they are actively trying to take health insurance away from those who now have it.

This week, the House will be voting on a reconciliation bill to repeal key parts of the Affordable Care Act. This is the House Republicans' 62nd attempt to repeal or undermine key provisions of the law.

The bill eliminates subsidies for individuals purchasing coverage through the exchanges and eliminates the Medicaid expansion. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the bill would increase the number of uninsured Americans by at least 22 million by 2018.

This bill would undo many of the historic gains in health coverage we've made in the past five years, while offering nothing to help those who will lose coverage, or to make healthcare more affordable and available for all Americans. As for a viable Republican alternative to the Affordable Care Act, which the Republicans have said they would offer for several years now, let me just say this - I'll believe it when I see it.

Let us actually work in a productive, bipartisan way to make the Affordable Care Act work better instead of taking empty, meaningless votes to repeal it and take insurance coverage away from our constituents.

I yield back.

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