



September 13, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we write to reiterate our strong support for permanently closing the Medicaid coverage gap for those living in the twelve, mostly Southern states that have refused to expand Medicaid despite very generous financial incentives offered by Congress in the American Rescue Plan.

The majority of those without access are low-income people and people of color who currently have no health care coverage at all.¹ People of color face inequities in health care access and outcomes which have only been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.² We believe this key civil rights issue needs to be remedied by a comprehensive and permanent solution to close the coverage gap, as the House Committee on Energy and Commerce has proposed for inclusion in the Build Back Better reconciliation bill. The proposed legislation would create a new federally run direct coverage program aligning with Medicaid, after a transition period of eligibility for fully subsidized plans in the ACA marketplaces. This will enable more than two million people, of whom more than 60% are people of color,³ to finally gain access to health coverage. They deserve nothing less.

We thank you and the Committee for your work to address this critical issue, which is one of our coalition's top priorities. Your permanent and comprehensive proposal must remain intact, and we stand ready to support your leadership in this area. Please contact June Zeitlin, senior advisor, at zeitlin@civilrights.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
Interim President & CEO

Jesselyn McCurdy
Interim Executive Vice President of Government Affairs

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/federal-action-needed-to-close-medicaid-coverage-gap-extend-coverage-to-22-million>

² <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/report/building-on-the-evidence-base-studies-on-the-effects-of-medicaid-expansion-february-2020-to-march-2021/>

³ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/closing-medicaid-coverage-gap-would-help-diverse-group-and-narrow-racial>

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