

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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### Opening Statement Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearing Hearing on “Examining Pathways to Universal Health Coverage” March 29, 2022

Today, I am convening the Committee on Oversight and Reform to examine a subject that touches the lives of every person in the United States—our nation’s health care system and Americans’ access to affordable, high-quality medical care.

**Democrats in Congress have spent decades fighting—and succeeding—to expand access to health care in the United States.** In 2010, under the leadership of President Obama, we passed the Affordable Care Act—a landmark law that made affordable health care accessible to more than 30 million people across the United States. That includes 14 million people with lower incomes who finally received high-quality health insurance thanks to the ACA’s Medicaid expansion. This also includes millions of people who had previously experienced obstacles to obtaining health coverage—including people with pre-existing conditions, older Americans, and women.

Unfortunately, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle not only opposed this law, but over the last decade they have voted more than 60 times to repeal or weaken it. Republican attorneys general sued in federal court trying to strike it down. And the Trump Administration refused to defend the ACA in court.

Despite these relentless attacks, and thanks to the tireless work of patients, caregivers, and community advocates, the ACA still stands.

**Since President Biden took office, congressional Democrats have continued to strengthen and enhance the ACA to make health care more affordable and accessible for every person in the United States. Last year, we passed President Biden’s American Rescue Plan—sweeping legislation that expanded the ACA’s financial assistance for patients and families working to make ends meet. But our work is not done yet.**

Today, more than 27 million people in the United States remain uninsured. And even for some who do have insurance, it’s not enough to insulate them from the significant cost of getting health care in this country.

Congressional Democrats have proposed and advanced many different reforms to close these coverage gaps and move our nation toward universal health coverage. We have voted on legislation to close the coverage gap left by Republican states that failed to expand Medicaid under the ACA, as well as legislation to expand Medicare benefits for older Americans and to further reduce out-of-pocket costs for patients with commercial coverage.

And more than one hundred of us have cosponsored the [Medicare for All Act](#), as proposed by my colleague, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, and championed by numerous Members of this Committee.

Medicare for All—a comprehensive proposal to transition our health care system to a national, single-payer model—offers a bold vision for an America where no patient is denied necessary medical care because it is too expensive, and no family has to decide between putting food on the table or paying their medical bills. This proposal fulfills a promise that I have long fought for: the promise that health care is a human right.

Medicare for All would contain skyrocketing costs across our health care system and provide a sustainable path to more equitable and accessible health care, especially for communities where access has historically been pushed out of reach.

**I have proudly supported Medicare for All since it was first introduced in Congress nearly two decades ago, and I will continue to push for this vision of the American health care system. At the same time, my Democratic colleagues and I will continue to fight for every bit of progress we can make in moving our nation toward universal coverage. While Republicans raise barriers to affordable health care, Democrats will continue working tirelessly to ensure that no person's financial circumstances keep them from obtaining quality care.**

Let me conclude by taking a moment to recognize the leadership of several of our Committee Members in bringing renewed energy and urgency to the fight for universal coverage.

Congresswomen Cori Bush, Ayanna Pressley, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Rashida Tlaib have been some of the most powerful voices in Congress for an America where health care is a human right, and I am grateful to partner with them.

Before I recognize the distinguished Ranking Member for his opening remarks, I'd like to recognize Congresswoman Bush for an opening statement.

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