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House of Representatives

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Statement of Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi
Hearing on “Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Under the Affordable Care Act”
Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits and Administrative Rules
January 31, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us today.

Millions of people now have high quality, affordable health insurance as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

One of my constituents wrote this to me, and I quote:

We are so grateful for the changes brought about by the Affordable Care Act in our situation. They have truly been life-changing for us. For the first time our family has access to dental coverage. This means we actually go to the dentist. Before this was a rare thing and only when in pain. For the first time our preventative care is covered. This means my children are up to date on their vaccines and physicals because it is not costing me hundreds of dollars out of pocket. For the first time we have hope that we may be able to dig out of the mountain of medical debt we have accumulated through a \$10,000 a year deductible plan that we were locked into because of pre-existing conditions because we now can get reasonable coverage through the marketplace.

There are millions of people with similar stories all across this country.

In addition, as a former small businessman, I know that the ACA has allowed entrepreneurs to flourish because they don't have to worry that starting a new business means they can't afford healthcare. When people have high quality, affordable health care, they can afford to follow their dreams and talents, become entrepreneurs, start businesses, create jobs and grow the economy. When they are fearful about losing their health insurance, or are buried under medical debt, none of those things are possible.

The Affordable Care Act empowered millions of people. One of them is a witness today, Jonathan Siegel. He will testify that the guarantee of affordable coverage under the ACA enabled him to start a new business.

But there is a lot of fear in the country that those gains will be taken away by House Republicans when they repeal the Affordable Care Act. In fact, today House Republicans have not offered an alternative to replace the ACA that offers the same coverage at a similar or lower cost. The consequences will be seriously harmful to Americans.

First, a recent Congressional Budget Office and Joint Committee on Taxation analysis estimates that 18 million Americans would lose their health insurance in just the first year following repeal.

Second, The CBO and Joint Committee on Taxation estimate that premiums would increase by 20-25% more than currently projected in the first plan year following repeal. Repealing the ACA will also reverse the Medicaid expansion, which would cause premiums to increase up to 50% more than current projections.

These consequences are not limited to those who bought their healthcare on exchanges. ACA protections apply to all health plans, including those that many Americans get through work. Employer-provided insurance plans would no longer be required to offer the same level of care that they do today. Employees with pre-existing conditions would have restrictions on their care, the lifetime cap on out-of-pocket expenses would disappear, and we'd return to the days when parents could not have their young adult children under 26 on their plans. Millions of working families would be stuck with inadequate plans that fail to provide comprehensive care.

Working families across the United States depend on the Affordable Care Act to ensure access to quality, affordable health care. Removing these protections will hurt business, workers, and families in my district and across the country.

Third, the economic consequences of repeal without replace would be catastrophic. My home state of Illinois stands to lose over 100,000 jobs and \$13 billion in economic activity. Over a million people in our state would lose healthcare. Ohio could lose over 126,000 jobs and nearly \$70 billion from their economy.

Repealing without replacing is foolhardy and reckless. What House Republicans have proposed so far inspires little trust that they their plans will actually help Americans.

We will not sit idly by while the ACA is torn down without any replacement being offered that provides coverage and protection to working families at a similar or lesser cost than the ACA.

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