

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 7, 2016

President-Elect Donald J. Trump
Trump Tower
725 5th Ave
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-Elect Trump:

We are writing to you to express our strong concerns that you have been remarkably inconsistent in your important campaign promise to protect and defend the Medicare and Medicaid programs and appear now to support policies that endanger the Medicare and Medicaid benefits that provide health care to tens of millions of seniors, people with disabilities, and low- and middle-income Americans. The nomination of Congressman Tom Price for Secretary of Health and Human Services underscores this concern.

During your campaign for President of the United States, you differentiated yourself from your 16 primary opponents by noting that you were the only Republican who would protect Medicare and Medicaid. After winning the election, you suddenly appear to be using language supporting policies that would gut the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

You could not have been clearer during the campaign about your opposition to program cuts to our nation's bedrock health care programs. Your campaign website proudly trumpeted that "Donald Trump won't touch your entitlements," and you claimed that "every other Republican is going to cut [these programs]," but "I'm not going to cut Medicare or Medicaid" (Figure 1).¹ It touted coverage that you "would exclude entitlement costs" from cuts to government spending (Figure 2).² It stated your policy in plain language: "Do not cut . . . Medicare benefits." And it rightly noted that "most Americans want to keep the benefits as they stand now" (Figure 3).³

This is the right policy. Over one hundred million Americans rely on these programs for health care. Low-income children and families and people with disabilities are the primary beneficiaries of Medicaid. Millions of seniors and individuals with disabilities have earned and rely on their Medicare benefits. Medicaid is the only assistance available to millions of low and middle-income families who have a loved one requiring nursing home care. As you noted when you extolled their benefits on your campaign website, cutting these programs would be devastating.

¹ Donald J. Trump for President, "Why Donald Trump Won't Touch your Entitlements" (May 21, 2015) (<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/media/why-donald-trump-wont-touch-your-entitlements>).

² Donald J. Trump for President, "Donald Trump Lays Out More Details of Economic Plan" (September 15, 2016) (<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/media/donald-trump-lays-out-more-details-of-economic-plan>).

³ Donald J. Trump for President, "What Does Donald Trump Believe? Where the Candidate Stands on 10 Issues" (June 16, 2015) (<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/media/what-does-donald-trump-believe-where-the-candidate-stands-on-10-issues>).

But your transition website has eliminated your earlier assurances and blatantly disregards the promises you repeatedly made during the campaign and instead now calls for sweeping changes to Medicare and Medicaid. As it currently stands, your transition team's policy proposals are shrouded in benign-sounding clichés that promise to “modernize” and “maximize flexibility” for the programs. But Americans who are watching closely can see your plans for what they are: a poorly-veiled regurgitation of the plans, supported by Republicans in the House and Senate, to gut Medicare and Medicaid.⁴ Your nominee for the Secretary of Health and Human Services is a leading architect of these plans.

Your transition website states that you will “Modernize Medicare so it will be ready for ...the coming retirements of the Baby Boom generation – and beyond.” And it indicates that you will overhaul Medicaid to “Maximize flexibility for states to ... experiment with innovative methods to deliver healthcare to our low-income citizens” (Figure 4).⁵ These statements are nearly identical to the healthcare reform language in Speaker Ryan's “Better Way” healthcare reform plan, which states: “Our plan maximizes state flexibility” and provides incentives for states to find “innovative ways to reduce Medicaid costs.”⁶ And on Medicare, the same report commits to: “moderniz[e] the program to reflect the changes to health care delivery in the 21st century” by “gradually increase[ing] the Medicare retirement age.”

House Republicans have been bracingly clear: they intend to work with you to pass these cuts. Reports indicate that Speaker Paul Ryan “is promoting his ‘A Better Way Agenda’ as a guide for Trump” on “health care” and other issues.⁷ And Representative Sean Duffy stated that “it's almost a plug and play scenario.”⁸

These Republican plans would be devastating for millions of Americans. They would increase the Medicare eligibility age.⁹ They would privatize Medicare, replacing guaranteed benefits with vouchers that seniors would be forced to use to purchase coverage, dramatically increasing out-of-pocket costs.¹⁰ They would cut billions of dollars from the Medicaid program, turning the program into a “block grant” that would force states to eliminate coverage for millions of beneficiaries, cut guaranteed benefits and consumer protections, and slash provider payments.¹¹

⁴ Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, A Better Way (2016) (<http://abetterway.speaker.gov/?page=health-care>).

⁵ President-Elect Donald J. Trump, Healthcare (November 16, 2015) (<https://www.greatagain.gov/policy/healthcare.html>).

⁶ Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, “A Better Way: Health Care” (June 22, 2016) (<http://abetterway.speaker.gov/assets/pdf/ABetterWay-HealthCare-PolicyPaper.pdf>).

⁷ Philip Rucker and Robert Costa, “In Trump's Washington, Rival Powers and Whispers in the President's Ear,” *The Washington Post* (November 16, 2016) (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-trumps-washington-rival-powers-and-whispers-in-the-presidents-ear/2016/11/16/50f3306c-ac03-11e6-a31b-4b6397e625d0_story.html).

⁸ Philip Rucker and Robert Costa, “In Trump's Washington, Rival Powers and Whispers in the President's Ear,” *The Washington Post* (November 16, 2016) (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-trumps-washington-rival-powers-and-whispers-in-the-presidents-ear/2016/11/16/50f3306c-ac03-11e6-a31b-4b6397e625d0_story.html).

⁹ Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, “A Better Way: Health Care” (June 22, 2016) (<http://abetterway.speaker.gov/assets/pdf/ABetterWay-HealthCare-PolicyPaper.pdf>).

¹⁰ Janet Novack, “Will President Trump Cut Medicare and Social Security As Well As Taxes?” *Forbes* (November 10, 2016) (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/janetnovack/2016/11/10/will-president-trump-cut-medicare-and-social-security-as-well-as-taxes/#6de64500a43f>). Michael Hiltzik, “Paul Ryan Is Determined to Gut Medicare. This Time He Might Succeed,” *The Los Angeles Times* (November 14, 2016) (<http://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-hiltzik-medicare-ryan-20161114-story.html>).

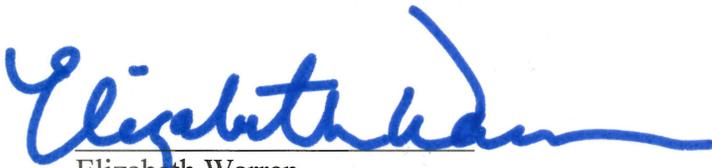
¹¹ Huffington Post, Not Just Obamacare: Medicaid, Medicare Also on GOP's Chopping Block (Nov.15, 2016) (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/obamacare-medicare-medicare-gop-chopping-block_us_582a19b8e4b060adb56fbae7).

Enacting these cuts to Medicare and Medicaid would devastate millions of middle- and low-income seniors and families, and break your promise to the American people that you would “not ... cut Medicare or Medicaid.”

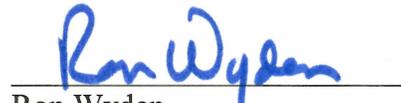
But now it seems you have reversed course on your promises to protect Medicare and Medicaid and instead plan to dismantle these programs.

It's not too late to fix this problem. We ask that you rapidly and publicly clarify in plain language for the American public that you continue to stand behind your campaign promises; that you will not raise the Medicare eligibility age; that you will not privatize, voucherize, or otherwise cut Medicare benefits; and that you will not put in place changes to Medicaid that force enrollees' coverage to be dropped and benefits to be cut or limited. You promised Americans you would not cut Medicare or Medicaid—please tell Americans you will stand by your promise to them.

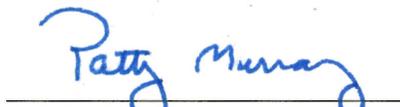
Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Ben Cardin
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Mazie Hirono

Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

Figure 1:

SCHEDULE ABOUT GALLERY

TRUMP PENCE MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN! 2016

POSITIONS STATES GET INVOLVED MEDIA SHOP **CONTRIBUTE**

- MAY 21, 2015 -

WHY DONALD TRUMP WON'T TOUCH YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

The Daily Signal

Donald Trump says if he runs for president he'll make sure entitlement programs aren't touched.

"I'm not going to cut Social Security like every other Republican and I'm not going to cut Medicare or Medicaid," Trump told The Daily Signal. "Every other Republican is going to cut, and even if they wouldn't, they don't know what to do because they don't know where the money is. I do."

*** MEDIA ***

IN THE NEWS

VIDEO

ADS

SPEECHES

*** ARCHIVE ***

Figure 2:

SCHEDULE ABOUT GALLERY

TRUMP PENCE MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN! 2016

POSITIONS STATES GET INVOLVED MEDIA SHOP **CONTRIBUTE**

- SEPTEMBER 15, 2016 -

DONALD TRUMP LAYS OUT MORE DETAILS OF ECONOMIC PLAN

Wall Street Journal

"Mr. Trump, in a speech at the Economic Club of New York, elaborated on his proposals to slash tax rates and regulations to boost growth."

"Earlier this week, (Republican presidential nominee, Donald Trump) proposed a **new package of tax breaks for child care** together with a new federal entitlement for maternity leave.

"My economic plan rejects the cynicism that says our labor force will keep declining, that our jobs will keep leaving and that our economy can never grow as it did once before," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump is calling on the government shrink nondefense spending, though he would exclude entitlement programs, which are projected to be the largest drivers of spending over the coming decades. To help achieve the planned cuts

*** MEDIA ***

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*** ARCHIVE ***

NOVEMBER 2016

OCTOBER 2016

SEPTEMBER 2016

AUGUST 2016

JULY 2016

Figure 3:

The image shows a screenshot of the Trump Pence 2016 website. At the top, there is a dark blue navigation bar with the text "SCHEDULE ABOUT GALLERY" on the right. Below this is a white navigation bar with a logo on the left that says "TRUMP PENCE MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN 2016". To the right of the logo are several menu items: "POSITIONS", "STATES", "GET INVOLVED", "MEDIA", "SHOP", and "CONTRIBUTE". The "CONTRIBUTE" button is highlighted in red.

Below the navigation bar, the date "JUNE 16, 2015" is centered. The main content area features a large heading: "WHAT DOES DONALD TRUMP BELIEVE? WHERE THE CANDIDATE STANDS ON 10 ISSUES". Below the heading is a sub-heading "PBS Newshour" and a short paragraph: "Here is where Donald Trump stands on ten key issues." This is followed by a section titled "Budget: Government must cut spending more." with a paragraph of text. Next is "Climate Change: It is a hoax." with a paragraph of text. Finally, there is a section titled "Entitlements: Do not cut Social Security or Medicare benefits. Grow the economy to save those programs." with a paragraph of text.

On the right side of the page, there is a vertical menu under the heading "MEDIA". The items listed are "IN THE NEWS", "VIDEO", "ADS", and "SPEECHES". Below this menu is a section titled "ARCHIVE" with a list of months from "NOVEMBER 2016" down to "MARCH 2016".

Figure 4:



The President Elect | The Vice President Elect | News

Making America Great Again | Serve America | Connect

Healthcare

Healthcare

It is clear to any objective observer that the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which has resulted in rapidly rising premiums and deductibles, narrow networks, and health insurance, has not been a success. A Trump Administration will work with Congress to repeal the ACA and replace it with a solution that includes Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), and returns the historic role in regulating health insurance to the States. The Administration's goal will be to create a patient-centered healthcare system that promotes choice, quality and affordability with health insurance and healthcare, and take any needed action to alleviate the burdens imposed on American families and businesses by the law.

To maximize choice and create a dynamic market for health insurance, the Administration will work with Congress to enable people to purchase insurance across state lines. The Administration also will work with both Congress and the States to re-establish high-risk pools - a proven approach to ensuring access to health insurance coverage for individuals who have significant medical expenses and who have not maintained continuous coverage.

The Administration recognizes that the problems with the U.S. health care system did not begin with - and will not end with the repeal of - the ACA. With the assistance of Congress and working with the States, as appropriate, the Administration will act to:

- Protect individual conscience in healthcare
- Protect innocent human life from conception to natural death, including the most defenseless and those Americans with disabilities
- Advance research and development in healthcare
- Reform the Food and Drug Administration, to put greater focus on the need of patients for new and innovative medical products
- Modernize Medicare, so that it will be ready for the challenges with the coming retirement of the Baby Boom generation - and beyond
- Maximize flexibility for States in administering Medicaid, to enable States to experiment with innovative methods to deliver healthcare to our low-income citizens

