



State of Connecticut
SENATE
STATE CAPITOL
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
SENATE REPUBLICAN OFFICES

December 18, 2018

Ned Lamont, Governor-Elect
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor-Elect Lamont:

As you are aware, a recent court ruling by a federal judge in Texas found the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to be unconstitutional. In addition, in recent years, growing premiums on health insurance plans all over the country and particularly in Connecticut have escalated, resulting in many people choosing to forego health care because they cannot afford an insurance plan. Given the challenges the Affordable Care Act is facing on a national level, and the problems with growing, unaffordable premiums under the current exchange system here in our state, we believe state leaders have an obligation to take action now to protect access to health care for our future.

Therefore, we are writing to you today to ask that you join us in establishing a bipartisan committee to examine the Affordable Care Act in light of rising premiums here at home and the recent ruling by the Texas court. Just as lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have worked together in Connecticut to codify many protections offered by the ACA in state law, we need to come together again to take a proactive approach to a) address the growing costs of insurance plans under the current system and b) make sure our state has policies in place that can provide affordable health care in Connecticut irrespective of what happens in Washington regarding the Texas ruling.

The exchange system we have in place today in Connecticut grows more and more unaffordable each year as insurers leave the exchange and premiums rise. Federal assistance was only designed to help states in the first few years of the ACA implementation, therefore the ACA by design has left Connecticut with a financial hole that strains the system and makes care more expensive. The more unaffordable, the less accessible health care becomes. Together, we have to figure out how to reduce these costs so more people can afford health insurance and access care. We also have to be proactive and ready a state-based plan should the Texas ruling be upheld and should Congress fail to quickly adopt new, appropriate policies.

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We recommend the proposed bipartisan committee include the following members:

- 1) Four state lawmakers: two co-chairs and two ranking members of the Insurance Committee (two Democrats and two Republicans)
- 2) The Insurance Department Commissioner
- 3) The Department of Social Services Commissioner
- 4) The Access Health CT Executive Director
- 5) Insurance Carriers
- 6) A representative from the Governor's Health Care Cabinet
- 7) The State Health Care Advocate

Here in Connecticut, Republicans and Democrats have worked together to adopt protections for preexisting conditions, essential health benefits, and women's health care coverage. We passed legislation to allow all young adults to stay on their parents' health insurance plans until they turn 26. We have stood hand in hand to develop and adopt policies that ensure our most vulnerable citizens have access to health care that covers their needs, regardless of what happens in Washington. That is why it is extremely frustrating to see certain opportunistic politicians in Congress and here in Connecticut use the Texas court ruling to incite division and fear, suggesting popular elements of the ACA would now be at risk here in Connecticut when the reality is Republicans and Democrats worked together to protect those very elements in our state. It's disappointing that a state legislative leader would make comments to the press ignoring the bipartisan support that propelled these important state laws forward. In case you were not aware, the bill the state legislature passed to specifically protect ten essential health benefits was shepherded out of committee by a Republican co-chair and was cosponsored by many Republicans. Either these politicians have forgotten what we have accomplished together in Connecticut, or they are purposefully ignoring the facts that don't fit their narrative. This political rhetoric and divisiveness that some local lawmakers and congressional legislators continue to use has no place in Connecticut. Through bipartisan efforts we have protected core elements of the ACA in Connecticut and we will continue to do so. We don't need the Washington D.C. "blame game" here in our state. That is why we need you as a leader to bring people together. We need our governor to set the example and make it clear health care policy should not be used as a political tool.

When it comes to creating an affordable and accessible health care system, we believe Connecticut has an opportunity to be the leader for all other states. We are the insurance capital of the world, we have bright minds on both sides of the aisle, and we all share the same desire to make health care affordable and accessible to all. Now is the time to take the politics out of health care and focus on the policy. Our residents deserve no less.

We look forward to working together with your administration on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Len Fasano
Senate Republican President Pro Tempore



Kevin Kelly
Assistant Senate Republican Majority Leader