



COMMITTEE ON  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
**DEMOCRATS**  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Pallone Opening Remarks at Full Committee Health Care Markup**

*“I simply cannot support this partisan attack on the ACA and Medicare”*

**Washington, D.C.** – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Full Committee markup of legislation to reauthorize the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Community Health Centers (CHC), and other important public health programs:*

Mr. Chairman, I’m sorry that we are convening today’s markup in this fashion. The opportunity existed for a bipartisan bill that would have moved the bill forward quickly. Indeed, we’re in for a contentious markup that will likely make it more difficult to move a bill that has a chance of becoming law. I reject the notion that partisanship means success. It never does.

Let me quickly note the seven Medicare related bills that passed out of Subcommittee unanimously and have bipartisan support. They make a number of different positive policy changes to our Medicare program. These include improving our meaningful use program, increasing our ability to timely treat stroke patients, removing barriers to speech generating devices, providing coverage to critical prostate cancer testing, expanding home-based primary care and strengthening our competitive bidding program for diabetes patients. We also will update civil and criminal penalties in the Medicare program, an important component to ensuring the integrity of the program.

Now, I’ll get to the contentious legislation. First is IPAB. My feelings on this board are no secret. I have never supported ceding our Congressional authority to the executive branch and am on record in opposition. But I’m upset by the timing of its consideration by this Committee and troubled by the hypocrisy of Republicans who don’t feel the need to offset the nearly \$18 billion cost of this bill. Yet somehow we’ve got to pay for the extension of children’s health care, community health centers and other health programs by undermining the ACA and Medicare.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that things could have and should have been different. You and I have spent the better part of the last week trying to negotiate what could’ve been a

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bipartisan package to extend critical health programs that expired on Saturday. These programs have broad bipartisan support. But the way they are put together today will likely mean more delay and possibly no action in Congress until the end of the year as part of an omnibus appropriations bill.

So today instead of marking up a bipartisan package – Democrats are being asked to sacrifice the health of some for the sake of others. And Republicans on this Committee continue their ongoing sabotage of the Affordable Care Act by cutting the ACA's Prevention Fund and limiting the grace periods which will strip health care away from hundreds of thousands of people. It also undermines Medicare. After failing to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, it is outrageous that the GOP Leadership continues its efforts to sabotage the ACA at the same time we are looking to reauthorize CHIP, Community Health Centers and other important public health extenders. Let's not forget that both CHIP and Community Health Centers are linked to the ACA. If the ACA continues to be sabotaged, it will inevitably hurt CHIP and Community Health Centers.

I simply cannot support this partisan attack on the ACA and Medicare. It's my hope that following this misguided approach we can come back together and find a better way forward.

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