

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

***Markup of Four Committee Prints, Full Committee***

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For months now, President Trump and Congressional Republicans promised the American people they would not cut Medicaid benefits or strip away people's health care. In February, President Trump said: "Medicare, Medicaid – none of that stuff is gonna be touched." House Speaker Johnson doubled down on that promise, stating, "The White House has made a commitment, the President has said over and over: 'We're not going to touch Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid. We've made that same commitment.'"

Those are the promises Republicans made to the American people. Well now, we have the bill, and it is clear they were being deceitful all along.

You don't have to take my word for it – the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office's own analysis shows that at least 13.7 million Americans will lose their health care coverage as a result of Trump and Congressional Republicans' actions. The Medicaid and Affordable Care Act cuts included in the Energy and Commerce bill will make up at least 8.6 million of that total number. And these are just early numbers from CBO – they are expected to grow.

Let me be clear – this is not a moderate bill, and it is not focused on cutting 'waste, fraud, and abuse.' Instead, Republicans are intentionally taking health care away from millions of Americans so they can give giant tax breaks to the ultra-rich who don't need them.

Medicaid is a lifesaving program that 80 million Americans count on every day. It provides health care to 1 in 3 Americans and nearly half of all children in the United States. It covers close to half of all births and is the largest source of funding for long-term care for seniors and people living with disabilities.

With this bill, Republicans are essentially telling millions of Americans – gotcha – no more health care for you. They are putting all sorts of burdensome and time-consuming roadblocks in the way of people just trying to get by – all so they can kick them off their health coverage. And if someone loses their coverage through Medicaid, this Republican bill bans them from getting coverage through the ACA Marketplace. They are prohibiting these people from getting health care. And this is just one way this bill repeals the ACA and makes it more difficult for people to get health coverage.

And Republicans are making it more difficult for states to finance their share of Medicaid costs by preventing them from implementing new provider taxes. This will be catastrophic for states as their health care needs change over time.

With this Republican bill, millions of Americans will lose their health care coverage. Hospitals, particularly those in underserved and rural communities, will close. Nursing homes will close, and seniors will lose the care they rely on. Emergency rooms will once again be overflowing as people are forced to delay care until it's life or death. And a larger number of uninsured Americans will lead to higher health care premiums for everyone – at a time when Republicans are already making health care unaffordable for millions more.

For decades, Democrats have been working relentlessly to make quality health care more accessible and affordable. It's worked – thanks to our efforts the number of uninsured Americans reached historic lows. But that is now all at risk as Trump and Congressional Republicans look to strip health care away from more than 13 million Americans and drive-up costs for everyone else.

What we are debating here today matters to millions of Americans. People like Lauren and Dani Zalepka. Lauren, who's on the right, is a longtime disability advocate in my community, but she's also a mom to her daughter Dani who has intellectual and developmental disabilities and relies on Medicaid. Thanks to programs available to Dani through Medicaid, she has become more independent. The programs help her manage her anxiety and stay connected to her friends.

Lauren is concerned about how devastating Medicaid cuts would be for people with disabilities. She has said: "Without programs like Medicaid that help them get out of bed in the morning, they will literally be stuck or worse, out in the community, unsafe and victimized." Lauren worries that cuts to Medicaid will take away her daughter's life, and she says: "Dani doesn't deserve that."

Lauren's right – Dani doesn't deserve that. And that's why Democrats will fight this cruel bill. The cruelty is the point that will strip health care away from millions of Americans so Republicans can give their ultra-rich friends massive tax breaks. We want to protect people's health care – not take it away.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.