



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

Nov. 28, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I urge you to take a stand in favor of fiscal responsibility and the preservation of vital programs helping millions of Americans by opposing the tax reform-reconciliation package as it currently stands.

As CHA has stated previously, **the Catholic health ministry strongly opposes the bill's provision to repeal the individual mandate under the Affordable Care Act**, which would lead to the loss of health coverage for 13 million people and an additional 10 percent increase in premiums. **In addition, the tax package also must be opposed as currently drafted due to its long-term effects on the nation's debt and fiscal policy and the implications for safety net programs, such programs as Medicaid and Medicare.**

As an organization guided by the social teachings of the Catholic Church, we firmly believe that federal budget and spending policies should be informed by moral principles and offer special protections for the poor and vulnerable. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the tax package would add \$1.4 trillion to the national deficit over the next decade. This type of unsustainable revenue loss will most assuredly lead to future efforts to pay for these tax cuts by cutting spending to programs and services relied upon by millions of vulnerable citizens. Health programs such as Medicaid and Medicare will be gravely threatened by this legislation, as would other programs providing food, housing and other social supports that help lift families and individuals out of poverty and improve their health outcomes. Spending cuts of that magnitude will seriously hamper the ability of Medicaid, Medicare and other federal programs to fulfill their purpose of making sure that the poor, vulnerable and elderly in our country are taken care of.

The CBO analysis also finds that the tax package's benefits will favor the wealthy over low-income individuals and families. By 2019, families earning less than \$30,000 a year would be worse off under the Senate bill. By 2021, those earning \$40,000 or less would pay more, and by 2027 that expands to most people earning less than \$75,000 a year. On the other hand, those earning between \$100,000 to \$500,000 or more would be the greatest beneficiaries. Creating unsustainable deficits and threatening spending programs through tax cuts is fiscally irresponsible, even if those cuts were targeted for the poor and middle class. Doing the same for tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy and corporations is not just fiscally irresponsible, it is morally irresponsible as well.



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The harm that this legislation would do, both in the short-term by repealing the individual mandate and in the long-term by penalizing low-income earners and taking valuable resources away from federal spending programs, is only now becoming clear as its provisions are scrutinized. I ask you to stand with us on behalf of all those who have received insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act, the children and families who rely on Medicaid for their basic health needs, and the elderly who need a strong and vibrant Medicare program to keep the costs of health care under control, and oppose this tax bill unless or until these issues are addressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO