

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 2, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell,

We write to support your efforts to ensure that women have full access to the comprehensive, affordable health insurance coverage guaranteed by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

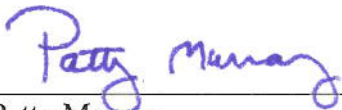
The ACA has made historic progress towards ending discrimination against women in the health insurance market by requiring private health insurance plans to include maternity coverage as an Essential Health Benefit. This is a critical protection – good maternity care is essential for the well-being of children, and studies show that maternal mortality rates are three to four times higher for women who do not receive prenatal care. Millions of women have benefitted from this protection, and we appreciate your leadership in getting this done.

However, if a woman becomes pregnant at a time outside of the Open Enrollment period and is uninsured, or enrolled in a grandfathered plan that does not cover maternity services, then she will not be able to access coverage for maternity care. Without access to maternity care coverage, these women are forced to either forgo this critical care or face significant out of pocket costs.

We appreciate your efforts to address this problem in the recently released Final Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2016, in which you acknowledge many advocacy groups' request for a special enrollment period in the insurance marketplaces for pregnant women and describe how the flexibility afforded by §155.420(d)(9) allows you to address the issue through sub-regulatory guidance. We encourage you to use that authority to create a special enrollment period to maximize women's access to coverage.

We appreciate your timely attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to ensure that all women and families have access to this Essential Health Benefit.

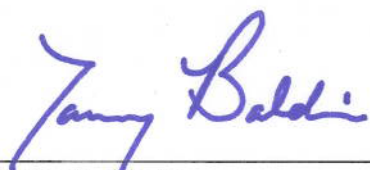
Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



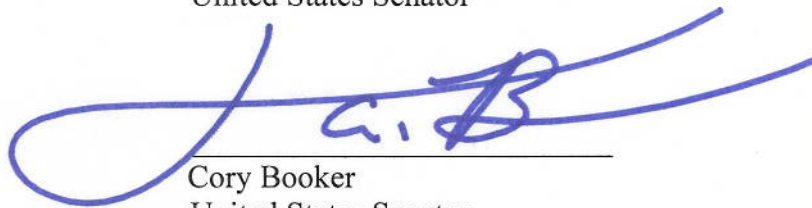
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



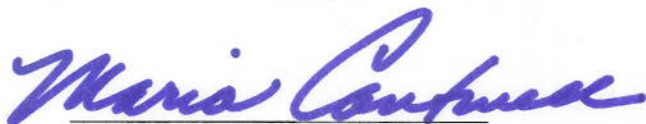
Cory Booker
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



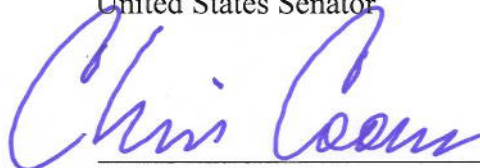
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



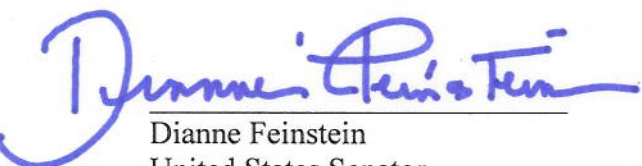
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



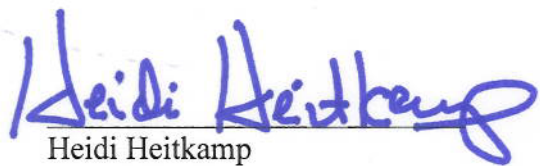
Al Franken
United States Senator



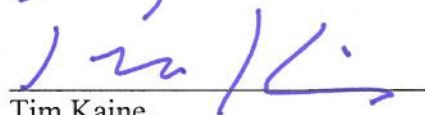
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



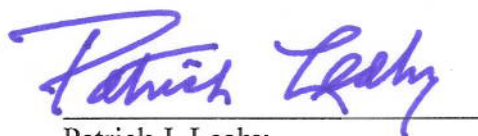
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



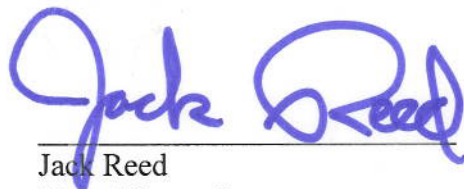
Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator




Jack Reed
United States Senator



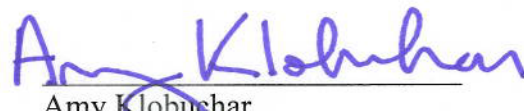
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



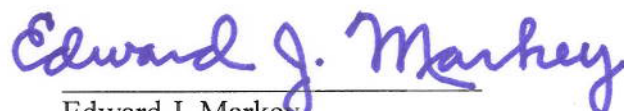
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



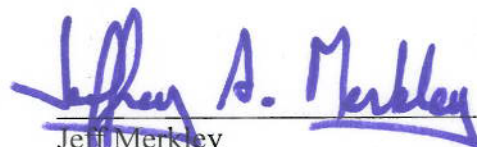
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Gary Peters
United States Senator




Bernard Sanders
United States Senator




Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator




Jon Tester
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator