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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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March 17, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Committee on
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Alexander,

We write to express our deep concern that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee is proceeding with hearings on health policy topics that do not address Republican plans to rip health coverage away from 24 million Americans. Next week's hearing, *FDA User Fee Agreements: Improving Medical Product Regulation and Innovation for Patients, Part I*, will come just as Speaker Ryan moves to jam Trumpcare through the House of Representatives at lightning speed.

If enacted, Trumpcare will upend lives nationwide. Failure to thoroughly scrutinize it would be an appalling abdication of this Committee's responsibilities—especially given Majority Leader McConnell's indications that the legislation will change drastically and outside of regular order should it reach the Senate, with no opportunity for public debate prior to the floor. Before the committee begins examination of the FDA user fee agreements, we request that you dedicate Tuesday's hearing to consideration of this far-reaching, reckless legislation Republicans aim to pass into law within a matter of weeks.

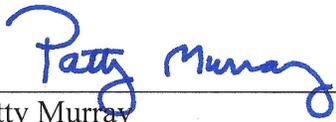
Republicans have already made attempts to limit public discussion of the devastating impact of Trumpcare. The House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees even voted on the bill before the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) completed its estimate of the bill's impact on federal spending and, most importantly, coverage and affordability for working families.

Now that the CBO score is public, it is clear why Republicans are moving to pass their dangerous bill so quickly. Quite simply, Trumpcare will be a disaster for the American people. CBO estimated that the bill will rip health insurance away from 24 million people by 2026. CBO further estimates that the legislation will impose huge premium increases on older Americans – as a result, about a third of 50-64 year olds with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level will be uninsured. The legislation also ends the Medicaid program—a bedrock of the American safety net since 1965—as we know it, shifting over \$800 billion in costs onto states, providers, and families.

There are widespread reports that many Senate Republicans share our concerns about the devastating impacts of the House's reconciliation bill. Majority Leader McConnell, however, has said that he would short-circuit regular order and bring the bill directly to the floor without hearings regardless of how different House and Senate versions may be. It is also clear that, if he introduces a Senate substitute amendment to a House-passed bill, such legislation will include substantial changes in policy as well as sweeteners to members of his conference intended to allay their concerns about the bill's impact on their constituents.

Meanwhile, you have not convened a single hearing in the HELP Committee to examine this effort and how it would impact families' health care coverage and costs. The Senate should not abdicate its responsibility to conduct the reconciliation process in an open and transparent way. Dedicating Tuesday's hearing to consideration of Trumpcare would be an important first step in this direction.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



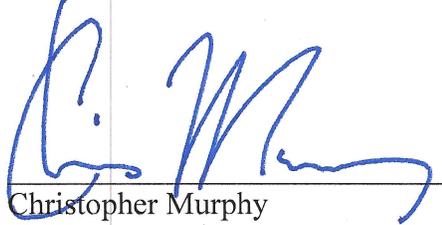
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



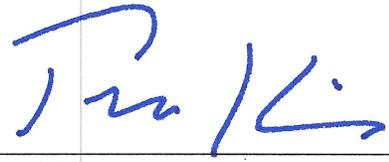
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United States Senator