Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 19, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The President-elect
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President-elect Trump:

Throughout your campaign, you repeatedly proclaimed, "Nobody respects women more than me." Tomorrow, you will be sworn in as the 45th President of the United States. From that day forward, your actions—not words—will demonstrate your willingness to advance positive policies for women. We, the undersigned members of Congress, urge you to reject a policy agenda that would harm women, starting with your efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and defund Planned Parenthood.

Many people are fearful about how your presidency will affect women and girls. You have promised to nominate Supreme Court Justices who will overturn *Roe v. Wade*. You have also nominated officials with unabashedly anti-woman records to serve in cabinet posts with power to affect women's health and day-to-day lives. Because of their fears about what lies ahead, women are already taking action to protect themselves against possible negative outcomes, such as by rushing to their doctors to obtain long-acting birth control before your inauguration.

While all of that is troubling, we write today to express deep concern about the Republican plan to repeal the ACA. You and your Republican colleagues in Congress have made clear that repealing the ACA, causing as many as 30 million people to lose health insurance, is a top priority for the 115th Congress. Repeal is such a high priority that you and Republicans in Congress are willing to charge forward without even agreeing on a replacement plan, a blatant abdication of your responsibilities as representatives of the American people. People are going to get hurt in very real ways, Mr. President-elect. The American people deserve to know how Republicans plan to avoid the devastating consequences of ACA repeal.

Throughout this reckless quest, Republicans have made no promises nor put forward any plans to preserve the ACA's crucial protections for women. Prior to the ACA, being a woman was effectively a pre-existing condition. Women were often denied insurance for having a C-section, breast cancer, or even a history of sexual or domestic abuse. When women were able to obtain coverage, they were charged much higher premiums than men based on gender alone. Thankfully, the ACA banned those discriminatory insurance company practices.

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The ACA also provides women with affordable access to the care they need. For example, birth control and preventive services like breast cancer screenings must be covered without cost-sharing. As a result, women now save over a billion dollars each year on birth control alone. Maternity care was also a rarity on the individual insurance market prior to the ACA, with only 12 percent of plans offering coverage, often only with exorbitantly high supplemental premiums. Today, virtually all plans offer maternity care thanks to the ACA. ACA repeal would be a major step backward for women because it would allow insurance companies to once again discriminate against women by denying them care and charging them higher prices based on gender.

Adding insult to injury, Speaker Paul Ryan and Republicans in Congress are shamelessly prioritizing politics over patients by proposing to defund Planned Parenthood as part of their plan to dismantle the ACA. Blocking patients from accessing care at Planned Parenthood would only exacerbate the untenable situation we face with ACA repeal. During the presidential campaign, even you acknowledged that Planned Parenthood does good work and helps millions of women and men. Planned Parenthood provides care to approximately 2.5 million patients each year, including tests for sexually transmitted diseases, breast exams, Pap tests, and contraceptive services. More than half of Planned Parenthood health centers are located in health professional shortage or medically underserved areas. In fact, one in five women has visited a Planned Parenthood health center in their lifetime. Access to affordable care in those areas would be severely hampered by blocking access to Planned Parenthood, especially when coupled with the chaos caused by ACA repeal.

We urge you to give more thought to how defunding Planned Parenthood and repealing the ACA would harm women in every district in every state. Taking these steps would leave all women worse off. As President, you will have the power to prevent this looming disaster. You, more than anyone else, will have to answer to those whose benefits, coverage, and access to care is abruptly ripped away.

The women of America are watching, Mr. President-elect. As are the men who care about them. The true test of whether your policy agenda will harm or help women begins tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Diana DeGette

DIANA DEGETTE
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter

LOUISE SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky

JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark

KATHERINE CLARK
Member of Congress

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
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