



ADVANCING JUSTICE APPLAUDS THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH CARE FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice) applauds the U.S. Senate vote of 51 to 49 votes to defeat H.R. 1628, the Health Care Freedom Act, also known as the “skinny repeal” bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare). In a late night vote, three Republicans - Senators Collins, Murkowski, and McCain -- joined all 48 Democrats to block the Senate Republicans from taking away critical health coverage from millions of Americans.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, an affiliation of five civil rights organizations, issues the following statement:

We are very pleased that the disastrous and distracting debate on the repeal and replacement of the ACA is finally over. We commend the courage of the Senate Republicans who voted “No” and stood up for tens of millions of Americans who could have lost their health care if this bill had passed.

Since the administration’s promise to repeal the ACA on President Trump’s first day in office, our staff, partners, and community members have tirelessly advocated for the ACA on behalf of immigrant communities across the country. The victory of blocking all of the ACA repeal and replace bills in the Senate is a testament to the numerous calls, e-mails, tweets, and actions of countless Americans and advocates across the nation speaking out against these efforts.

It is time for us to acknowledge the successes of the ACA and strengthen its provisions to ensure that more Americans have access to quality, affordable health coverage, and services. The ACA has benefitted millions of Americans, including over 1.6 million Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) and significantly closed the coverage gap for Americans. Since the passage of the ACA on March 23, 2010, the uninsurance rate for AANHPIs fell drastically by 59%, the highest among all racial groups. The Senate health care bill would have repealed important provisions of the ACA, including the individual mandate, the employer mandate, funding for Planned Parenthood and the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the medical device tax, and certain key regulations to protect individuals with pre-existing conditions and ensure coverage of essential health benefits. The analysis by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) of the proposed Senate and House bills to repeal and replace the ACA would have resulted in between 18 to 22 million Americans becoming uninsured by 2026, including millions of AANHPIs, as well as increased premiums and worse coverage for many people.

Although we have avoided a major setback for our communities by defeating the Congressional bills, we must remain vigilant and continue to protect the ACA against the administration’s attempts to sabotage

and weaken the ACA through administrative actions by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, such as its refusal to fund critically needed cost-sharing subsidies for the next Open Enrollment Period.

Moving forward, Advancing Justice will continue to build upon the gains of the ACA and provide culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach, education, and enrollment activities and health care services to AANHPI and immigrant communities. We will also continue to work with other community-based organizations, health care providers, and small business groups nationally, ensuring that AANHPIs have access to our health care system and voice our concerns in future health care debates. Any health care reform legislation should build upon the successes of the ACA to expand coverage, continue to reduce health care costs, and maintain consumer protections so that all Americans have better access to affordable and quality health care.

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Asian Americans Advancing Justice is a national affiliation of five leading organizations advocating for the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and other underserved communities to promote a fair and equitable society for all. The affiliation's members are: Advancing Justice - AAJC (Washington, D.C.), Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (San Francisco), Advancing Justice - Los Angeles, Advancing Justice - Atlanta, and Advancing Justice - Chicago.