



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

June 21, 2017

The Honorable Pat Toomey
United States Senate
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Toomey:

I write you today in complete frustration with the process regarding health care changes in Washington. We had spoken last month, and on May 30th, per your request, I sent you a letter regarding my concerns with the approach you and your leadership, along with Republican leadership in the House of Representatives, were taking. I also offered a variety of areas of focus and issues related to health care that would actually help Pennsylvania improve and expand health care coverage to residents. I did not hear back.

Regardless, last week, I sent a letter with six other bipartisan governors, including Republican governors from Ohio, Nevada and Massachusetts, asking Majority Leader McConnell to involve us in this process as ultimately we will have to implement many of these changes and deal with the terrifying reality of deep cuts to Medicaid.

To my frustration, every indication appears that these bipartisan governors, along with countless health advocacy groups, patient advocates, medical professionals, hospitals, and more, will also be ignored and shut out of the Senate's process.

This is too important – too vital – for secrecy and partisanship. The current path stands to leave possibly a million Pennsylvanians without health insurance over the next decade.

With your proposal about to be unveiled, I want to take this moment to talk about Medicaid. For hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians, Medicaid is not a handout – it is a lifeline. It helps families care for an aging parent or a child with a disability. It is helping our state battle the opioid epidemic by diverting people from punitive criminal justice settings and into the treatment they desperately need. It allows kids with intellectual and physical disabilities to go to school and learn.

Even your Republican colleagues from neighboring states – Senators Portman and Capito – have expressed reservations with the rumored Medicaid changes that would cap Medicaid spending, shift it to a lower future growth rate, and ultimately force cuts at the state level unless state taxes are increased to cover the funding cut at the federal level. Republican Governors Kasich, Sandoval and Baker, along with my Democratic colleagues, also raised a red flag over Medicaid cuts in our letter.

The Honorable Pat Toomey
June 21, 2017
Page Two

Unfortunately, press reports indicate you have advocated for Medicaid cuts to go even further than the House. Even worse, statements from your office have seemingly sought to confuse your constituents about this issue. Saying that these changes won't make anyone ineligible for Medicaid is disingenuous and does not reflect the budgetary reality of covering these populations should you choose to cut federal funding for your state, which you know faces legacy financial challenges.

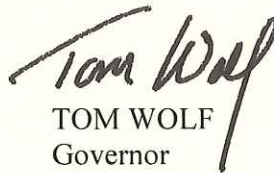
Under Medicaid cuts in the House proposal, Pennsylvania will be forced to either significantly scale back the health care programs we currently offer to vulnerable residents, such as seniors and individuals with disabilities, or will be forced to weigh decisions about who to cover against other critical state funding obligations, including education, infrastructure, and the environment.

Worse for older Pennsylvanians, the House bill charges older Pennsylvanians an "age tax" of up to five times what younger Pennsylvanians will pay. For low-income seniors currently receiving income-based tax credits, this, on top of Medicaid cuts, will be especially devastating.

I ask you to join me and Republican governors and Senators to support a more open, bipartisan and intellectually honest debate about the future of health care in this country. Any debate about health care should be about how we cover more people, not less.

I extend to you and your staff an open invitation to have an honest, in-depth conversation about how your approach to Medicaid would hurt Pennsylvania's state budget, and, more importantly, the people who need lifesaving care. I will make myself available to your schedule.

Sincerely,


TOM WOLF
Governor

Cc: United States Senator Bob Casey, Jr.
United States Congressional Delegation from Pennsylvania