

House Democrats Vote To Protect Patients with Pre-Existing Conditions and Lower Costs of Prescription Drugs

Saturday, May 4, marked the two-year anniversary of House Republicans passing their TrumpCare bill to take health care coverage and protections away from millions of Americans. Since that bill failed in the Senate, the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans have worked tirelessly to sabotage the Affordable Care Act, including by pursuing a lawsuit that would invalidate the entire ACA. Just last week, the Administration updated its court filing in the Texas case to support striking down the entire law, which would kick millions of Americans off their health care plans, remove protections for patients with pre-existing conditions, and prevent those under the age of twenty-six from staying on their parents' health coverage.

This week, the House will vote on legislation to start reversing the Trump Administration's sabotage of the ACA and protect the 133 million Americans who have a pre-existing condition as well as two bills addressing the rising cost of prescription drugs. House Democrats will continue to build on this effort in the coming weeks with additional legislation to strengthen health care and lower prescription drug costs.

PROTECTING AMERICANS WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Last fall, the Trump Administration issued guidance on Section 1332 of the ACA, removing a requirement on states that health coverage plans be comprehensive, affordable, and protect patients with pre-existing conditions. Instead, the Administration's guidance encourages states to allow junk insurance plans that do not protect Americans with pre-existing conditions. This guidance would raise the costs of comprehensive health coverage by driving up premiums for Americans who are older, sicker, or have pre-existing conditions.

H.R. 986, the Protecting Americans with Pre-Existing Conditions Act, reverses the Trump Administration's health care sabotage by revoking the Administration's guidance. The bill requires that state waivers under Section 1332 protect patients with pre-existing conditions and maintain affordability throughout the insurance market place.

LOWERING PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

The House will also consider two suspension bills on the Floor this week dealing with the rising cost of prescription drugs. The Food and Drug Administration uses the "Purple Book" and "Orange Book" to provide manufacturers with information that is used when they are considering where to invest their research and development dollars.

H.R. 1520, the Purple Book Continuity Act, requires the FDA to keep its "Purple Book" on valid patents on biologics up to date. Ensuring the Purple Book contains the latest and most accurate information is an important first step in increasing access to biosimilars.

H.R. 1503, the Orange Book Transparency Act of 2019, requires the FDA to keep up to date its "Orange Book," which provides information on drug patents. Generics developers track this information for opportunities to bring generic drugs to market.

As the Trump Administration ramps up its efforts to sabotage the ACA and the health care relied on by millions of Americans, House Democrats are hard at work advancing legislation to protect Americans with pre-existing conditions, make health coverage more affordable, and lower the cost of prescription drugs.