

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 7, 2016

President-Elect Donald J. Trump  
Trump Tower  
725 5th Ave  
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-Elect Trump:

We are writing to you to express our strong concerns that you have been remarkably inconsistent in your important campaign promise to protect and defend the Medicare and Medicaid programs and appear now to support policies that endanger the Medicare and Medicaid benefits that provide health care to tens of millions of seniors, people with disabilities, and low- and middle-income Americans. The nomination of Congressman Tom Price for Secretary of Health and Human Services underscores this concern.

During your campaign for President of the United States, you differentiated yourself from your 16 primary opponents by noting that you were the only Republican who would protect Medicare and Medicaid. After winning the election, you suddenly appear to be using language supporting policies that would gut the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

You could not have been clearer during the campaign about your opposition to program cuts to our nation's bedrock health care programs. Your campaign website proudly trumpeted that "Donald Trump won't touch your entitlements," and you claimed that "every other Republican is going to cut [these programs]," but "I'm not going to cut Medicare or Medicaid" (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> It touted coverage that you "would exclude entitlement costs" from cuts to government spending (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> It stated your policy in plain language: "Do not cut . . . Medicare benefits." And it rightly noted that "most Americans want to keep the benefits as they stand now" (Figure 3).<sup>3</sup>

This is the right policy. Over one hundred million Americans rely on these programs for health care. Low-income children and families and people with disabilities are the primary beneficiaries of Medicaid. Millions of seniors and individuals with disabilities have earned and rely on their Medicare benefits. Medicaid is the only assistance available to millions of low and middle-income families who have a loved one requiring nursing home care. As you noted when you extolled their benefits on your campaign website, cutting these programs would be devastating.

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<sup>1</sup> Donald J. Trump for President, "Why Donald Trump Won't Touch your Entitlements" (May 21, 2015) (<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/media/why-donald-trump-wont-touch-your-entitlements>).

<sup>2</sup> Donald J. Trump for President, "Donald Trump Lays Out More Details of Economic Plan" (September 15, 2016) (<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/media/donald-trump-lays-out-more-details-of-economic-plan>).

<sup>3</sup> Donald J. Trump for President, "What Does Donald Trump Believe? Where the Candidate Stands on 10 Issues" (June 16, 2015) (<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/media/what-does-donald-trump-believe-where-the-candidate-stands-on-10-issues>).

But your transition website has eliminated your earlier assurances and blatantly disregards the promises you repeatedly made during the campaign and instead now calls for sweeping changes to Medicare and Medicaid. As it currently stands, your transition team's policy proposals are shrouded in benign-sounding clichés that promise to “modernize” and “maximize flexibility” for the programs. But Americans who are watching closely can see your plans for what they are: a poorly-veiled regurgitation of the plans, supported by Republicans in the House and Senate, to gut Medicare and Medicaid.<sup>4</sup> Your nominee for the Secretary of Health and Human Services is a leading architect of these plans.

Your transition website states that you will “Modernize Medicare so it will be ready for ...the coming retirements of the Baby Boom generation – and beyond.” And it indicates that you will overhaul Medicaid to “Maximize flexibility for states to ... experiment with innovative methods to deliver healthcare to our low-income citizens” (Figure 4).<sup>5</sup> These statements are nearly identical to the healthcare reform language in Speaker Ryan's “Better Way” healthcare reform plan, which states: “Our plan maximizes state flexibility” and provides incentives for states to find “innovative ways to reduce Medicaid costs.”<sup>6</sup> And on Medicare, the same report commits to: “moderniz[e] the program to reflect the changes to health care delivery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” by “gradually increase[ing] the Medicare retirement age.”

House Republicans have been bracingly clear: they intend to work with you to pass these cuts. Reports indicate that Speaker Paul Ryan “is promoting his ‘A Better Way Agenda’ as a guide for Trump” on “health care” and other issues.<sup>7</sup> And Representative Sean Duffy stated that “it's almost a plug and play scenario.”<sup>8</sup>

These Republican plans would be devastating for millions of Americans. They would increase the Medicare eligibility age.<sup>9</sup> They would privatize Medicare, replacing guaranteed benefits with vouchers that seniors would be forced to use to purchase coverage, dramatically increasing out-of-pocket costs.<sup>10</sup> They would cut billions of dollars from the Medicaid program, turning the program into a “block grant” that would force states to eliminate coverage for millions of beneficiaries, cut guaranteed benefits and consumer protections, and slash provider payments.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, A Better Way (2016) (<http://abetterway.speaker.gov/?page=health-care>).

<sup>5</sup> President-Elect Donald J. Trump, Healthcare (November 16, 2015) (<https://www.greatagain.gov/policy/healthcare.html>).

<sup>6</sup> Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, “A Better Way: Health Care” (June 22, 2016) (<http://abetterway.speaker.gov/assets/pdf/ABetterWay-HealthCare-PolicyPaper.pdf>).

<sup>7</sup> Philip Rucker and Robert Costa, “In Trump's Washington, Rival Powers and Whispers in the President's Ear,” *The Washington Post* (November 16, 2016) ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-trumps-washington-rival-powers-and-whispers-in-the-presidents-ear/2016/11/16/50f3306c-ac03-11e6-a31b-4b6397e625d0\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-trumps-washington-rival-powers-and-whispers-in-the-presidents-ear/2016/11/16/50f3306c-ac03-11e6-a31b-4b6397e625d0_story.html)).

<sup>8</sup> Philip Rucker and Robert Costa, “In Trump's Washington, Rival Powers and Whispers in the President's Ear,” *The Washington Post* (November 16, 2016) ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-trumps-washington-rival-powers-and-whispers-in-the-presidents-ear/2016/11/16/50f3306c-ac03-11e6-a31b-4b6397e625d0\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-trumps-washington-rival-powers-and-whispers-in-the-presidents-ear/2016/11/16/50f3306c-ac03-11e6-a31b-4b6397e625d0_story.html)).

<sup>9</sup> Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, “A Better Way: Health Care” (June 22, 2016) (<http://abetterway.speaker.gov/assets/pdf/ABetterWay-HealthCare-PolicyPaper.pdf>).

<sup>10</sup> Janet Novack, “Will President Trump Cut Medicare and Social Security As Well As Taxes?” *Forbes* (November 10, 2016) (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/janetnovack/2016/11/10/will-president-trump-cut-medicare-and-social-security-as-well-as-taxes/#6de64500a43f>). Michael Hiltzik, “Paul Ryan Is Determined to Gut Medicare. This Time He Might Succeed,” *The Los Angeles Times* (November 14, 2016) (<http://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-hiltzik-medicare-ryan-20161114-story.html>).

<sup>11</sup> Huffington Post, Not Just Obamacare: Medicaid, Medicare Also on GOP's Chopping Block (Nov.15, 2016) ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/obamacare-medicare-medicare-gop-chopping-block\\_us\\_582a19b8e4b060adb56fbae7](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/obamacare-medicare-medicare-gop-chopping-block_us_582a19b8e4b060adb56fbae7)).

Enacting these cuts to Medicare and Medicaid would devastate millions of middle- and low-income seniors and families, and break your promise to the American people that you would “not ... cut Medicare or Medicaid.”

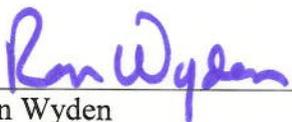
But now it seems you have reversed course on your promises to protect Medicare and Medicaid and instead plan to dismantle these programs.

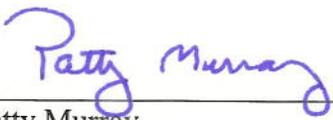
It’s not too late to fix this problem. We ask that you rapidly and publicly clarify in plain language for the American public that you continue to stand behind your campaign promises; that you will not raise the Medicare eligibility age; that you will not privatize, voucherize, or otherwise cut Medicare benefits; and that you will not put in place changes to Medicaid that force enrollees’ coverage to be dropped and benefits to be cut or limited. You promised Americans you would not cut Medicare or Medicaid—please tell Americans you will stand by your promise to them.

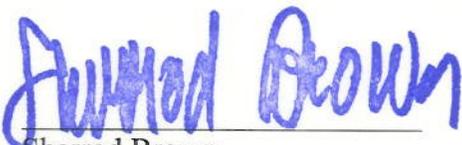
Sincerely,

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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

  
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

  
Patty Murray  
United States Senator

  
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

  
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



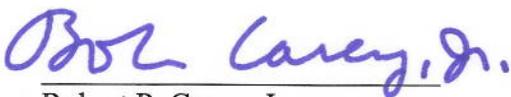
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

Figure 1:



Figure 2:

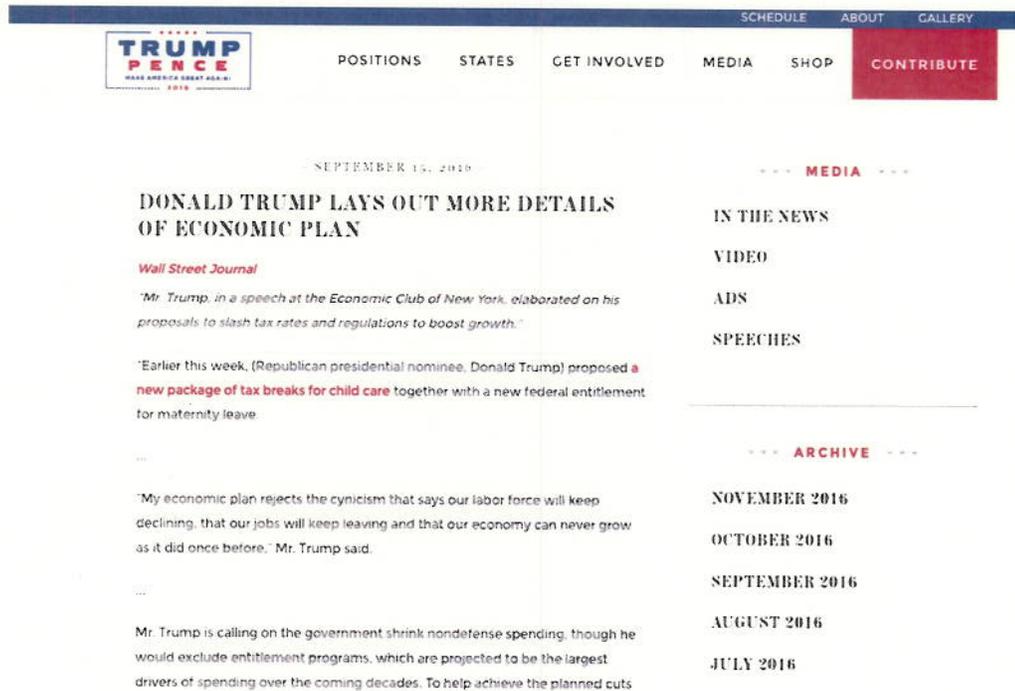


Figure 3:

The image shows a screenshot of the Trump Pence 2016 website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following links: SCHEDULE, ABOUT, GALLERY, POSITIONS, STATES, GET INVOLVED, MEDIA, SHOP, and CONTRIBUTE. The CONTRIBUTE button is highlighted in red. Below the navigation bar is a logo for TRUMP PENCE 2016 with the slogan 'MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN'. The main content area features a date 'JUNE 16, 2015' and a headline: 'WHAT DOES DONALD TRUMP BELIEVE? WHERE THE CANDIDATE STANDS ON 10 ISSUES'. Below the headline is a sub-headline 'PBS Newshour' and a paragraph: 'Here is where Donald Trump stands on ten key issues.' This is followed by a section titled 'Budget: Government must cut spending more.' with a paragraph: 'Speaking on Fox News in 2013, Donald Trump said that automatic budget cuts, or sequester, does not go far enough and Congress must reduce spending further to address impending increases in the deficit.' Next is a section titled 'Climate Change: it is a hoax.' with a paragraph: 'Trump does not believe climate change is real, tweeting out his skepticism with strong language and calling it a hoax on Fox News in 2014. In a 2012 Twitter post which is no longer accessible, Trump charged that the concept of climate change was created by the Chinese to suppress the U.S. economy. In addition, Trump has expressed firm opposition to wind turbines, which he sees as an environmental and aesthetic problem.' This is followed by a section titled 'Entitlements: Do not cut Social Security or Medicare benefits. Grow the economy to save those programs.' with a paragraph: 'The real estate tycoon told CPAC in 2013 that Republicans should not cut Social Security or Medicare because most Americans want to keep the benefits as they stand now. His solution is unclear, but he has indicated that general economic growth would play a role.' To the right of the main content area is a sidebar with a 'MEDIA' section containing links for 'IN THE NEWS', 'VIDEO', 'ADS', and 'SPEECHES'. Below this is an 'ARCHIVE' section with a list of months from 'NOVEMBER 2016' down to 'MARCH 2016'.

Figure 4:

The President Elect | The Vice President Elect | News

PRESIDENT ELECT  
DONALD J. TRUMP

Making America Great Again | Serve America | Connect

# Healthcare

## Healthcare

It is clear to any objective observer that the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which has resulted in rapidly rising premiums and deductibles, narrow networks, and health insurance, has not been a success. A Trump Administration will work with Congress to repeal the ACA and replace it with a solution that includes Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), and returns the historic role in regulating health insurance to the States. The Administration's goal will be to create a patient-centered healthcare system that promotes choice, quality and affordability with health insurance and healthcare, and take any needed action to alleviate the burdens imposed on American families and businesses by the law.

To maximize choice and create a dynamic market for health insurance, the Administration will work with Congress to enable people to purchase insurance across state lines. The Administration also will work with both Congress and the States to re-establish high-risk pools - a proven approach to ensuring access to health insurance coverage for individuals who have significant medical expenses and who have not maintained continuous coverage.

The Administration recognizes that the problems with the U.S. health care system did not begin with - and will not end with the repeal of - the ACA. With the assistance of Congress and working with the States, as appropriate, the Administration will act to:

- Protect individual conscience in healthcare
- Protect innocent human life from conception to natural death, including the most defenseless and those Americans with disabilities
- Advance research and development in healthcare
- Reform the Food and Drug Administration, to put greater focus on the need of patients for new and innovative medical products
- Modernize Medicare, so that it will be ready for the challenges with the coming retirement of the Baby Boom generation - and beyond
- Maximize flexibility for States in administering Medicaid, to enable States to experiment with innovative methods to deliver healthcare to our low-income citizens