



National Task Force to End
Sexual & Domestic Violence

For Immediate Release
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Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Groups Warn that House-Passed Health Bill Would Harm Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Urge Senate to Reject the AHCA

Washington, D.C. – As national organizations working to end domestic violence and sexual assault in the United States, we are very disappointed that the House of Representatives passed a bill that puts the lives, safety and health of victims at risk.

Members of Congress who voted for this bill voted against some of our nation's most vulnerable women and children. The American Health Care Act (AHCA) would prevent many domestic violence and sexual assault victims from getting the medical and behavioral health services they need because it allows states to waive essential health benefits, which mandate coverage for mental health care and other critically important services. It would make buying insurance more expensive and increase out-of-pocket expenses, which would push coverage out of reach entirely for some middle- and low-income victims. And it would give abusers another tool with which to threaten and control their families because its continuous coverage requirement means coverage would be unaffordable for people who lose their employer-sponsored health coverage.

We are particularly concerned this bill will return us to the days when rape or domestic violence could cause higher premiums, making victims uninsurable. We must not be fooled by the last minute change ostensibly protecting people with pre-existing conditions. By allowing individual insurers to decide how much to charge, insurance companies may simply price people right out of care with outrageous premiums.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one out of four American women have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime, with 70 percent of victims first experiencing abuse before the age of 25. Nearly 23 million women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape in their lifetime, with 40 percent experiencing the assault before the age of 18.

Finally, while providing significant tax cuts for the wealthy, this bill would phase out federal funding for the Medicaid expansion, affecting millions of low income people currently enrolled under the expansion, and would significantly reduce overall federal funding for Medicaid by turning it into a block grant program.

We urge the Senate to reject this attempt to repeal the protections and services that are so critical to domestic and sexual assault victims and their families.

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