

NEWS

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Bishop David Zubik's statement on proposed Graham-Cassidy health care bill

“Lord, when did we see you ill . . . and not minister to your needs?”

This verse from the Gospel of Matthew -- to which Jesus replies that he is every sick person in need of care -- is a foundation of the Church's conviction that universal medical care is a basic human right.

Our society should reflect our moral values, and one way we do that is through shared responsibility for health insurance. The Catholic bishops of the United States have endorsed universal health care since 1919.

My name is on a Supreme Court case seeking to reform the Affordable Care Act so that it respects religious freedom, but I have always recognized that its core mechanisms benefit millions of us.

Currently before the Senate is the proposed “Graham-Cassidy” health care bill. I have serious concerns about how it would affect the most vulnerable people in our society, including those in nursing homes, pregnant women, those with pre-existing conditions and the mentally ill.

Over the summer, a bipartisan Senate group has been carefully crafting a different bill intended to improve what we have now. Their effort should be given time to reach fruition and be fully debated, not be undercut by a hasty proposal that will devastate countless numbers of people.

Please contact Senator Bob Casey and Senator Pat Toomey (www.usa.gov/elected-officials) asking them to ensure that any health care bill meets these criteria:

- 1) Reject harmful changes to Medicaid that would cut aid to current recipients.
- 2) Provide affordable coverage for those with pre-existing medical conditions.
- 3) Cover hospitalization.
- 4) Cover mental health care and substance abuse treatment.
- 5) Cover maternity care, while prohibiting use of federal funds for abortions or for plans that cover abortion.
- 6) Include conscience protections for those in the health care system.