

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

Friday, April 28, 2017

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer,

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHHLA), the coalition of the nation's 45 preeminent Latino advocacy organizations, we are writing to urge you to include in the 2017 omnibus bill the \$900 million which Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price says is necessary for Puerto Rico to fulfill its Medicaid obligations through June 30, 2018.

Without this bridge funding, Puerto Rico will face a "Medicaid cliff" with devastating consequences for its people. When the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) was enacted, Puerto Rico received \$6.4 billion in supplemental funding for its Medicaid program. This supplemental funding will be depleted before the end of 2017 at which point Puerto Rico will revert to receiving an annual capped federal Medicaid allotment estimated at \$357.8 million in FY 2018. If Washington does not act, 480,000 individuals will lose their coverage by December, with another 510,000 to follow soon after.

The health-services industry in Puerto Rico which accounts for roughly 20 percent of the Puerto Rican economy will contract with the depletion of Medicaid funds. The exodus of Puerto Ricans to the mainland will accelerate and put a strain on stateside health care budgets. This additional crisis can be avoided if you include this \$900 million appropriation that Puerto Rico so desperately needs.

The bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Economic Growth in Puerto Rico established under the PROMESA Act stated in its report:

"The Task Force believes that Puerto Rico and the other territories should be treated in a more equitable and sustainable manner under the Medicaid program, in order to improve patient outcomes in the territories, to strengthen the health care systems in the territories, to enhance federal oversight of those systems, to reduce the incentive for migration from the territories to the states and the associated financial costs to state governments and the federal government, and to stabilize and strengthen the fiscal condition of the territory governments."

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alianza Americas
American G.I. Forum
ASPIRA Association
Avance Inc.
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
Farmworker Justice
Green Latinos
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Inter-University Program for Latino Research
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Latino Justice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Mi Familia Vota
National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Association of Hispanic Publications
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association of Latino Independent Producers
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
National Council of La Raza
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Environmental Council
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Latina/o Psychological Association
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
Presente.org
SER Jobs for Progress National Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
U.S.- Mexico Foundation
Voto Latino

As Congress works to finalize the omnibus bill, the NHLA respectfully requests that Congress include Medicaid bridge funding of \$900 million for Puerto Rico. Consistent with the finding of the bipartisan Congressional Task Force we also ask that Congress find an equitable and fiscally sustainable federal healthcare funding solution that meets Puerto Rico's long term needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Sanchez", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hector E. Sanchez

Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA)
Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)