



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Senate Democrats Blast President Trump and Unveil Plan To Protect New Yorkers Health Coverage

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 8, 2017

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**



Albany, NY - The Senate Democratic Conference today announced a comprehensive plan to stand up to President Trump and protect New Yorkers' healthcare. The plan includes the creation of a universal single-payer health plan for New York State, as well as bills to safeguard the New York State Health Exchange and related insurance protections from federal attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The Senate Democratic proposals would protect the 3.6 million New Yorkers currently receiving health insurance thanks to the

Affordable Care Act against any efforts by Trump and his allies to strip them of their coverage. Additionally, the innovative single payer health plan advanced by the Senate Democrats would ensure every single New Yorker has access to high-quality health insurance.

“Every hard working person and family in New York State has a right to affordable and quality health insurance,” Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “That is why our Conference is taking action to advocate for a single payer plan while also ensuring that those currently covered thanks to the ACA here in New York State are protected from Trump’s immoral attempt to strip coverage from Americans and bring us backwards.”

Senator Gustavo Rivera, Bill Sponsor and Ranking Member on the Senate Health Committee, said, “Passing the single-payer health care law would be a fundamental step in ensuring once for all that every New Yorker has access to affordable and quality health care coverage, while saving New York State tax payers millions of dollars in the long term. At a time when the federal government is actively working to repeal the Affordable Care Act, it is critical and necessary that our State takes the appropriate steps to safeguard New Yorkers access to health care. As the ranking member of the Health Committee in the State Senate, I am committed to work tirelessly along with my colleagues in the legislature to finally make health care a right and not a privilege in our state.”

Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried, Chair of the Assembly Health Committee and Assembly bill sponsor, said, “New York Health will provide universal health coverage with ‘improved Medicare for all’ for every New Yorker. It would reduce costs for families, employers, health care providers and taxpayers, reduce property taxes, and ensure that every New Yorker has high-quality health care.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Neil Breslin said, “Repealing the Affordable Care Act would have devastating consequences both here in New York and nationally. Over 3 million New Yorkers would lose their health insurance while New York State would incur an almost \$4 billion hit resulting in less funding for our schools, infrastructure and other meaningful programs. Because of this uncertainty at the federal level it is imperative that we let New Yorkers know that their health care will be preserved. Now is a time when we must stand together and let Congress know how important keeping the Affordable Care Act in place is for the health of so many New Yorkers.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Roxanne Persaud said, “We must not allow the 3.6 million New Yorkers who have received health insurance coverage thanks to the Affordable Care Act to be harmed by actions in Washington. I am proud to sponsor legislation that would cement New York’s Health Exchange into state law so no matter what happens in Washington, New Yorkers will remain protected. Health care is a basic human right, and I will stand up for it.”

The Senate Democrats’ outlined an ambitious plan to create a universal single payer health plan - New York Health - to provide comprehensive, high-quality health coverage for all New Yorkers. Proposals were also announced to ensure the current New York State Health Exchange would be protected, regardless of what anti-Affordable Care Act steps are taken by Trump and the Washington Republicans. When the New York State Health Exchange was originally proposed, the Senate Republicans were so hostile to the idea of helping more New Yorkers receive health insurance that the initiative needed to be passed by Executive Order. With the State Senate Republicans passionately supporting President Trump and his efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the need for action to protect New Yorkers is clear. Implementing the Senate Democratic Conference’s proposals would protect the 3.6 million New Yorkers who are covered under the New York State Health Exchange and ensure all New Yorkers would receive high-quality health insurance coverage.

The Senator Democratic Conference's Resistance Agenda Health Care package includes:

- Implementation of a New York Health Single Payer Health Plan – Senator Rivera
- Codification of the New York State Health Exchange into State Law – Senator Breslin
- Amending New York's Insurance Law to ensure Health Exchange would function without ACA in place – Senator Persaud

Senate Democratic Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, "With the calamity going on in our nation's capital, we have a responsibility in New York to set an example for other states. Extending health care coverage to more New Yorkers must be a priority for us all. I am proud to join my Senate Democratic colleagues in advancing New York Health and urge others in public service to support this important legislation."

Senate Democratic Policy Group Chair Daniel Squadron said, "With healthcare under attack on a national level, it's urgent that the state take meaningful steps to protect New Yorkers' access to healthcare. Protecting quality, affordable healthcare, and ensuring our healthcare institutions are thriving, must be critical focuses this session. I thank the Democratic Conference for continuing to push on this important issue."

Senator Jamaal Bailey said, "Regardless of their economic status, people should have access to affordable health coverage. Under this current administration the healthcare system has been under constant attack. Over 20 million uninsured Americans have coverage now. To repeal and replace is not the right strategy. I am proud to stand with my colleagues as we put forth an agenda to protect New Yorkers health care."

Senator John E. Brooks said, "The current state of uncertainty in the United States' healthcare system is deeply troubling. Access to affordable health insurance is a right, not a privilege, and I stand ready to work with my colleagues to protect the health of each and

every New Yorker.”

Senator Leroy Comrie said, “From making sure that individuals can get coverage even if they have a preexisting condition to expanding Medicaid, the ACA has increased healthcare coverage and given greater financial security to millions of people in our state. I stand with my colleagues in the Democratic Conference who are working to protect New Yorkers’ health coverage, and I appeal to members in the Republican and Independent Democratic Conferences to work with us to avoid the harmful consequences of an Obamacare repeal.”

Senator Martin Malavé Dilan said, “Access to affordable and quality healthcare is a necessity, and New Yorkers expect and deserve it. It’s safe to assume that we can’t rely on Washington to propose health policies in the interest of providing care for New Yorkers. Senate Democrats have long been behind the push for quality National care. We’re more than happy to head off an unhinged administration and his surrogates at home to pass a true single-payer health plan and enact responsible healthcare policies that benefit every New Yorker.”

Senator Brad Hoylman said, “The Congressional Republicans’ health care replacement plan is a disaster-in-waiting for 3.6 million New Yorkers who rely on the ACA for their insurance. It’s up to states like New York to resist. The State Senate Democrats’ health plan will provide affordable, quality care to every New Yorker, regardless of age, gender or income. My thanks to Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Senator Gustavo Rivera for standing up to the Trump Administration and sending a message that in New York, health care is a right and not a privilege.”

Senator Tim Kennedy said, “At a time when we should be working to ensure that New Yorkers and all Americans maintain access to safe, affordable, and practical healthcare options, we’re instead discussing the idea of repealing an effective plan without presenting a

better solution. To do so would not only be careless, it would endanger thousands of New Yorkers. As elected representatives, we have the responsibility to do the people's work, which is why I'm proud to stand with my conference colleagues to say New York can and needs to do better."

Senator Liz Krueger said, "I challenge anyone to make a list of their friends and family who don't deserve healthcare - you'll soon find, of course, that the task is impossible. But if Republican leaders in Washington have their way, that's precisely the task we'll all be faced with. The truth is, everyone has a right to quality, affordable healthcare. Although the Affordable Care Act has led to significant improvements, our system still leaves too many people out in the cold while costing way more than it should. The single-payer plan outlined in the New York Health Act is the kind of smart policy New York deserves in the 21st century. It will save New Yorkers money while guaranteeing universal access to care. Washington ideologues are working hard to pull the rug out from under hard-working families, the sick, and the elderly; it's up to us to ensure that all New Yorkers are protected."

Senator Kevin Parker said, "The legislative package proposed today by the Senate Democratic Conference aimed at preserving healthcare coverage for New Yorkers is essential, especially in this day and age of exclusionary policies coming out of Washington. The Affordable Care Act has provided millions of working class families in New York crucial and life-saving healthcare, and it is imperative that we continue to protect their rights, despite any plans President Trump or any coalition may have to strip healthcare from New York State residents."

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, "The purpose of government is to protect the rights of its citizens and I firmly believe healthcare to be one of those rights. It is shameful that Congressional Republicans are attempting to pull the rug from under 3.6 million New Yorkers under the Affordable Care Act. Such an act will cost New York \$3.7 billion and will

result in millions of uninsured people in our nation. New York is a leader in progressive legislation and we must show by example that repealing the ACA will not be tolerated. I am proud to stand with my colleagues in the Democratic Senate in support of a concrete single-payer healthcare system and I will support all efforts to protect the New York health exchange from being scrapped altogether.”

Bob Master, Assistant to the Vice President CWA District One, said, “I commend the Senate Democrats for putting forward smart and strong proposals this will help protect the health care of over 3 million New Yorkers. We need to stand together against the outrageous assault on working people that is being advanced by Trump Republicans. We must ensure that money is going to working men and women’s health care and not into the pockets of health insurance company CEOs.”

Hector Figueroa, President of SEIU 32BJ, said, “Repealing the Affordable Care Act is an affront to working families across the nation. Here in New York, we must ensure that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare, not just the wealthy.”

Marva Wade, NYSNA Vice President, said, “As frontline nurses, we cannot tolerate any backward movement in access to care. New Yorkers deserve better. That means a guarantee of quality care: the New York Health Act. The time is now to do away with commercial health insurance-- the forces that profit from care denials. If we work together, defend exchanges and the progress accomplished under the Affordable Care Act, we can do away with healthcare inequalities and move towards universal quality care for all New Yorkers.”

Oliver Fein, MD, Board Chair of Physicians for a National Health Program NY Metro Chapter, said, “We have made significant progress in recent years by increasing health insurance coverage through the ACA. We must continue to make progress until we have guaranteed health care for all. We urge New York State to enact single payer legislation that

will provide healthcare to all residents, while eliminating the financial barriers to care that still exist for so many who seek life-saving and preventative treatment. The majority of people support such a plan, and we are encouraged to see a substantial portion of the New York State Senate follow the Assembly in support of the New York Health Act.”

Mary O’ Brien, MD, Board Member of Physicians for a National Health Program NY Metro Chapter, said, “By passing the New York Health Act, every resident of New York will be able to get the health care they need -- when they need it. As a physician, I will be able to spend my time caring for patients and providing continuity of care rather than dealing with insurance company rules, changing drug coverage, increased costs for patients at every turn, and denials of necessary care. With strong political leadership, New York can lead the way to a high quality universal single-payer health care system--the kind a majority of physicians nationally and in New York State support.”

William Ritchie, President of the Albany County Central Labor Federation, said, “Our unions spend a completely disproportionate amount of time bargaining for health insurance benefits from providers who put the interests of shareholders before the needs of workers and their families. ‘For profit’ insurance companies should have no place in any system which provides health care for citizens of our state or country.”

Maria Alvarez, Executive Director of the Statewide Senior Action Council, said, “I work with seniors, and our members know about the benefits of a single-payer health care system because they are on Medicare (traditional Medicare is our homegrown single-payer system in the U.S.). They can tell you: Medicare works. Medicare’s administrative cost – despite caring for the oldest and sickest in our population – is only 2%^[1] as opposed to the 15-20% overhead of private health insurance companies. Extending and improving Medicare is the best way – actually, the only way – to cover everyone (including our kids and grandkids) while saving money. With improvements like covering vision, dental, long term care, the full range of

reproductive health care, guaranteeing free choice of doctor and hospital without restrictive networks, we can have the best care in the world in New York. That's why we support the New York Health Act."

Steve Choi, Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition, said, "Many immigrants in New York State and their families have benefited immeasurably from implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Simply put, the ACA works for New Yorkers. We support efforts at all levels of government to preserve its gains nationwide. We also applaud New York legislators' efforts to take the next step and develop a single-payer program to guarantee affordable, high-quality health care for all."

Reverend Emily McNeill, Acting Director of the Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS, said, "Health care is a moral issue. Everyone deserves access to care that they need, regardless of income or wealth. The ACA allowed many more New Yorkers to get health care, but it still left people behind. Now we have to move forward, not backwards. It's time to pass the New York Health Act and ensure that no New Yorker faces needless suffering or premature death because they can't get medical care."

ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION INFO:

Single Payer Plan – Senator Rivera

Every New York resident would be eligible to enroll in a quality health care plan, regardless of age, income, wealth, employment, or other status.

Coverage would be publicly funded and no longer be paid for by insurance companies charging a regressive "tax" - insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays - imposed regardless of ability to pay.

- New York Health would be paid for based on ability to pay, through a progressively-graduated payroll-based premium and a progressively-graduated premium based on other taxable income, such as capital gains, interest and dividends.

Codification of the New York State Health Exchange – Senator Breslin

Codifies New York's States Health Exchange in state law and not by an executive order as it is currently.

Amend New York's Insurance Law – Senator Persaud

Amends the New York's Insurance Law to make sure those protections and coverage requirements enacted under the Affordable Care Act are protected in New York State Law should the federal law cease to exist.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S4840

- Introduced
 - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Provides for establishment of the New York Health plan

March 03, 2017

In Senate Committee [Health](#)

Sponsored by [Gustavo Rivera](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S4781

- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to the establishment of the New York Health Benefit Exchange

March 01, 2017

In Senate Committee [Corporations, Authorities and Commissions](#)

Sponsored by [Neil D. Breslin](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S4828

- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Provides health insurance coverage for New Yorkers if the federal Affordable Care Act is repealed

March 02, 2017

In Senate Committee [Insurance](#)

Sponsored by [Roxanne J. Persaud](#)

Do you support this bill?