

For Immediate Release

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Iowans Ask: Will Senator Ernst Stand Up for Our Care?

Sen. Ernst has an opportunity to Protect Iowans with Pre-Existing Conditions

Iowans visited Senator Ernst today: <https://youtu.be/mjTOnZ31pMQ>

(CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA October 10, 2019) — Iowans gathered today to demand that Senator Ernst support Senator Mark Warner's (D-VA) [resolution](#) to protect Americans with pre-existing conditions. Sen. Warner and Senate Democrats introduced a discharge petition to force a vote on this resolution and undo the Trump administration's new junk insurance plans that don't cover people with pre-existing conditions.

"It's beyond frustrating to visit your Senator's office and feel like you can't get an answer," said Linda Fritts, from Hiawatha, Iowa. "Senator Ernst has the chance to once and for all protect people with pre-existing conditions, and she's refusing to do it. The truth is she doesn't care about people like me or Iowa families. That's pretty clear from her repeated votes to take away our health care. Thankfully we'll have a vote of our own next year, and we will remember whose side she's really on."

Matt Sinovic, executive director of Progress Iowa, called on Senator Ernst to stand up for Iowans with pre-existing conditions by supporting the resolution introduced by Senate Democrats:

“Nearly 1.3 million Iowans live with a pre-existing condition, and Senator Ernst has a responsibility to stand-up for their health care by supporting Senate Democrats’ efforts to undo the Trump administration’s push for junk insurance plans that could put people’s health at risk. Iowans need a senator who will expand access to care and lower costs, not somebody who will stand with the Trump administration to eliminate their care.”

BACKGROUND

President Trump Wants To Gut Crucial Guardrail Protections. If He Gets His Way:

- **Protections for people with pre-existing conditions would be essentially meaningless.** The [American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#) said allowing states to waive essential health benefits “could render those protections meaningless” for people with pre-existing conditions.
- **It would be harder for people with pre-existing conditions to get affordable coverage.** As [Consumers Union](#) stated, allowing states to waive essential health benefits would be “putting meaningful coverage out of reach for many Americans, especially those with chronic and pre existing conditions.”
- **You could pay more for the same coverage.** The Trump administration would allow states to adjust the amount of premium tax credits and cost sharing consumers receive to help lower their costs. Without the guardrail to ensure coverage is just as affordable, many consumers could end up paying more for the same care.
- **Insurers would not have to cover essential benefits, like maternity care.** Right now, every insurance plan must cover the 10 essential health benefits. Because states could opt out of covering these basic benefits, insurers would likely only offer policies that covered much less than they do now. The Kaiser Family Foundation found that the benefits most likely to no longer be covered would be [maternity care, mental health or substance abuse](#) coverage.
- **Insurers could reimpose lifetime and annual limits.** Allowing states to opt out of the essential health benefits coverage means that insurance companies could once again put [lifetime and annual limits](#) on the amount of care you receive. The Center for American Progress estimates that [20 million](#) people with health coverage through their employer would face lifetime limits on coverage, and [27 million](#) would face annual limits.

As Many As 130 Million Americans Have A Pre-Existing Condition

- According to an [analysis](#) by the Center for American Progress, roughly half of nonelderly Americans, or as many as 130 million people, have a pre-existing condition. This includes:
 - 44 million people who have high blood pressure

- 45 million people who have behavioral health disorders
 - 44 million people who have high cholesterol
 - 34 million people who have asthma and chronic lung disease
 - 34 million people who have osteoarthritis and other joint disorders
- [17 million](#) children, [68 million](#) women, and [30 million](#) people aged 55-64 have a pre-existing condition