



For Immediate Release
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Farmworker Justice's Statement on Senate Health Care Bill

Washington, DC - Farmworker Justice opposes the Senate's Health Care Bill, released late last week. Similar to the House version, passed in May, the Senate bill would reduce access to health insurance for farmworkers and their families.

The Senate bill, called the "[Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017](#)," eliminates many of the ACA provisions that make health insurance accessible and affordable – individual and employer mandates, cost-sharing reductions, essential health benefits, and Medicaid expansion. It also fundamentally changes Medicaid, reducing federal Medicaid payments to states through a per-capita cap. Additionally, it defunds Planned Parenthood, an important safety-net provider for many women in rural communities.

Most impactful for many farmworkers and their families, the Senate bill, like the House bill, restricts immigrant eligibility for health insurance and tax credits to those who are U.S. citizens, nationals, or "qualified aliens" as defined by section 431 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Few farmworkers are offered comprehensive health insurance by their employers. Undocumented immigrants do not benefit from Obamacare. The use of the PRWORA definition would exclude more immigrants from coverage even though they are "lawfully present." Consequently, temporary foreign agricultural workers hired under the H-2A visa program will lose their access to affordable health insurance.

Farmworkers face numerous health risks yet have few options for health insurance. Under the ACA, farmworkers and their families have made important gains in health insurance coverage. The Senate bill will undo these gains. Farmworkers need more options for health insurance coverage, not fewer. Farmworker Justice opposes any bill that will result in reduced access to health insurance and health care for farmworkers and other low-income, rural Americans.