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Pallone Statement on Gov. Christie's Veto of NJ Health Care Exchange Law

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ-06) released the following statement today in response to New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's decision to veto the health care exchange law passed earlier this year by the state legislature. A critical part of the Affordable Care Act includes the creation of health care exchanges to establish a market place for the purchase of affordable health insurance plans. States were meant to tailor their specific needs to a state-based exchange, but those who opt out will be obligated to have the federal government run an exchange for them.

"I am deeply disappointed by Governor Christie's decision to veto Senate Bill 2135, the bill establishing New Jersey's state-based health care exchange. By vetoing the bill, Governor Christie has abdicated the critical responsibility and foregone the opportunity for our state to establish an exchange program tailored directly to New Jersey's specific needs.

"Governor Christie had an opportunity to allow New Jersey to create a health care exchange that would have been unique to our state, which has been at the forefront of so many important health care innovations, including many components that were instrumental in the creation of the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act was designed to give all Americans access to affordable health care. It also established a system that can be more precise to individual health care needs and choices, which is why state-based health care exchanges are so helpful in empowering individuals to make the best decisions for them. Under the law, states that chose not to create their own state-based exchange will be forced to participate in a larger and less targeted federal exchange, which will provide good insurance plans, but will not be targeted directly to New Jerseyans.

"The decision by Governor Christie to veto our state's health care exchange squandered New Jersey's right to self determination and has put the state in a position where we can no longer

specify a plan that fits our needs. Governor Christie had ample time, opportunity and resources to create a viable plan for New Jersey to have fully functioning exchanges up and running in the time prescribe by the law, but instead he chose a path that lessens our home-grown influence over our health care.”

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