

PRESS RELEASE

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Supreme Court's Health Care Rulings Could Jeopardize Coverage for Millions of Americans

Court to Review Medicaid Expansion as Well as Individual Responsibility Provision

Today, the United States Supreme Court agreed to review the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals' decision that found the individual responsibility provision of the Affordable Care Act unconstitutional. The Supreme Court also announced it would review the Eleventh Circuit's ruling in the same case that upheld the Affordable Care Act's expansion of Medicaid to millions of low-income Americans. The following is the statement of Ron Pollack, the Executive Director of the consumer health organization Families USA (which has been a signatory on a friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the ACA in several appellate courts), on today's developments:

"We are surprised and troubled that the Court has decided to review the states' objections to the Affordable Care Act's expansion of Medicaid to millions of low-income Americans. Since Medicaid was enacted in 1965, Congress has expanded the program many times without objection from the Court. The federal government pays for the majority of Medicaid's expenses, and it is reasonable that it establish the ground rules for the program's operation.

"It is particularly disingenuous for the states bringing this case to object to this expansion of Medicaid as 'coercive,' because the Affordable Care Act specifies that between 90 and 100 percent of the costs of this expansion will be paid for by the federal government. Striking down this Medicaid expansion would jeopardize health care for millions of low-income Americans at a time when they can least afford it.

"At the same time, we welcome review of the Eleventh Circuit decision that struck down the individual responsibility provision. The individual responsibility provision is designed to make sure that people who can afford to purchase insurance do so, rather than passing their health care costs onto everyone else.

"So far, of the four appellate courts that have ruled on substantive challenges to the law, only the Eleventh Circuit has held any portion of the law unconstitutional. The others (the Sixth, Fourth, and DC Circuits) have all rejected the arguments against the law.

"These decisions in favor of the Affordable Care Act have been written by judges from across the ideological spectrum and appointed by presidents of both parties. They illustrate how the language of the Constitution, a century of precedent, and common sense are all on the side of the Affordable Care Act. We fully expect the Supreme Court to follow existing precedent, reverse the Eleventh Circuit, and uphold the law in its entirety."

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Families USA is the national organization for health care consumers. It is nonprofit and nonpartisan, and its mission is to secure high-quality, affordable health coverage and care for all Americans.

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