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I. ACA REPEAL EFFORTS FAIL (FOR NOW)

Since the failed efforts to pass the ACA repeal in the Senate, repeal efforts have been set aside in Congress . . . at least for the moment. President Trump continues to lash out at Congress and Senate Majority Leader McConnell; but, Congress appears to be moving on to tax “reform”.

Last week, in an unusual act of bipartisanship, Senators Alexander (R-TN) and our own Patty Murray (D-WA) announced that they would try to move legislation to strengthen ACA insurance markets. This might include continue the cost-sharing subsidy payments and establishing a risk pool to cover the costs of patients with extraordinary costs. Countering this effort, the Trump Administration continues to threaten discontinuing cost-sharing subsidy payments and waive the individual mandate – steps that would destabilize the insurance markets. These statements and (non)-actions have led to some insurers pulling out of Exchange markets and others to raise premiums by 20% or more.

ACTION: If you haven’t already, please thank each of the Senators below for their leadership, resistance and perseverance, even in the face of Trump’s threats of retribution:

- Lisa Murkowski, R-AK (Phone: 202-224-6665 Fax: 202-224-5301 for her D.C. office OR Phone: 907-271-3735 Fax: 877-857-0322 in Anchorage)
- Susan Collins, R-ME (Phone: 202-224-2523, Fax: 202-224-2693 for her D.C. office OR Phone: 207-945-0417 in Bangor).
- Senator John McCain, R-AZ (Phone: 202-224-2235 Fax: 202-228-2862 in his D.C. office OR Phone: 602-952-2410 Fax: 855-952-8702 in Phoenix)

ACTION: Call and/or fax Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and thank them for their tireless work on behalf of us, their constituents. Thank Patty Murray for working with Senator Alexander and the Senate HELP committee to move legislation to support the insurance markets. Your calls really matter to them!

- Senator Patty Murray Phone: (253) 572-3636
- Senator Maria Cantrell Phone: (253) 572-2281

It appears that a majority of the members of the Senate HELP committee, including those listed below, may support Murray’s and Alexander’s bipartisanship. If you have time, contact these members to urge they support Committee leadership’s efforts to stabilize the insurance markets:
II. RESTRICTING FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ACT OF 2017

Summary: This bill (HR 669) prohibits the President from using the Armed Forces to conduct a first-use nuclear strike unless such strike is conducted pursuant to a congressional declaration of war expressly authorizing such strike. "First-use nuclear strike" means a nuclear weapons attack against an enemy that is conducted without the President determining that the enemy has first launched a nuclear strike against the United States or a U.S. ally.

The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs: 40 Cosponsors, 1 is Republican, Sponsor is Ted Lieu.

Where our MoCs stand: None of our MOCs are sponsors of the bill.

What to do:

- Contact House Committee on Foreign Affairs Chair Ed Royce -R phone 202-225-4111 or fax 714-255-0109 and/or Ranking Member Eliot Engle - D phone 202-225-2464 fax 202-225-5513 and urge them to move HR 669 forward o Contact Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
- Contact Senate Committee on Foreign Relations - Chair Bob Corker phone 202-224-3344 fax 202-228-0566 and/or Ranking Member Benjamin Cardin phone 202-224-4524 fax 202-224-1651 and urge them to move S.200 forward
- Contact Denny Heck and ask him to support HR 669
- Contact Cantwell and Murray and ask them to support S. 200
- Scripts: I am calling (---) in his role as (Chair or Ranking Member) of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. As a citizen, I urge you to move the bill HR 669 Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017 forward for a vote. One person should never have the authority to make a ‘first strike’ with nuclear weapons.
• To Denny Heck: Please support HR 669 Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017 and do all that you can to limit the president’s power for a nuclear first strike.

• To Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray: Please support S. 200 Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017 and do all that you can to limit the president’s power for a nuclear first strike.

III. TRUMP ADMINISTRATION WORKS TO UNDERMINE THE ACA:

Issue: The Washington Post reported that the Trump Administration abruptly cancelled the $22 million contracts with two companies that have been holding ACA enrollment fairs and insurance sign-ups in public libraries around the country. At the same time, the portion of HHS that oversees the exchanges and the federal enrollment website convened its annual June meeting with “navigators” to assist people to enroll and told them their grants would continue.

Problem: It is unclear whether the government will contact the 10 million people with ACA coverage to let them know that sign-ups will only last 45 days, half as long as in the past three years or whether HHS will run call centers for consumers who need help as they look for plans.

Call to Action: Call our MoCs to tell them that you support the ACA and that you object to any destabilize the ACA and ask them to demand that the Trump Administration work to maintain the viability of the ACA.

IV. US THREATENS NORTH KOREA

Issue: The New York times reported that in response to a report by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) that North Korea has succeeded in miniaturizing a nuclear warhead to fit onto an ICBM, Trump threatened North Korea August 8, saying that if the North threatened the US again, the US would unleash “fire and fury like the world has never seen” against it. Trump’s comments were extemporized and surprised his aides. North Korea promptly threatened to target Guam, with its concentration of US military bases. Trump’s statements have had the effect of unnerving US Asian allies South Korea and Japan. Some analysts were surprised given that the US had a major diplomatic success in getting China and Russia to agree to new UN Security Council sanctions just days before.

Problem: The DIA has had a history of assuming North Korean progress on nuclear miniaturization that has proven wrong more than once in the past. Other US intelligence agencies do not share the DIA position, though there is general agreement that the North is likely to solve this technical challenge in the next 2-3 years.

Call to Action: Ask our MoC to demand that international disputes be resolved in the manner we have provided for: through the US State Department and the United Nations.

V. VOTING RIGHTS

Issue: The US Justice Department is siding with Ohio in its purge of inactive voters. The New York Times reported that the Justice Department has reversed its position in a high-profile voting case in
Ohio, siding with the state in its effort to purge thousands of people from its rolls for not voting in recent elections. The move is part of a broader campaign by the Trump administration to support restrictions on who is eligible to vote. The brief filed August 7 was not signed by career attorneys in the department’s civil rights division, but only by political appointees.

Problem: Ohio’s procedure allows the state to purge voters from the voter rolls. If a voter has not cast a ballot in two years, the person is sent a notice asking them to confirm their registration. If the voter does not respond and does not cast a ballot over the next four years, the person is removed from the rolls. Civil rights groups last year challenged Ohio’s process, arguing that such purges are prohibited under the National Voter Registration Act. Under Ohio’s procedure, the state can purge people from the voter rolls who have ostensibly moved without any evidence that they have actually moved.

Call to Action: Call or email or write to our MoC. Script: I am ______ , a constituent of the State of Washington. The right to vote is inviolate. I ask that you demand the US Justice Department to terminate its support for the purge of state voting records as a violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

VI. CLIMATE CHANGE

Issue: A federal climate change report was leader out of fear that the Trump Administration will not release it. Federal scientists from 13 federal agencies have prepared an over-600 page report required by Congress every four years on the status of climate change and efforts to contain it. The National Academy of Sciences has signed off on the draft report. Its authors are waiting for permission from the Administration to release it. The report has been leaked out of fear that the report will not be released, given the climate denial position of the Administration.

The report found that the average temperature in the US has risen rapidly and drastically since 1980 and that temperatures in recent decades have been the warmest in at least 1,500 years. It says that there is major evidence for a changing climate, from the top of the atmosphere to the deep ocean. The report notes that thousands of studies, conducted by tens of thousands of scientists, have documented climate change, and that many lines of evidence demonstrate that human activities, especially greenhouse-gas emissions, are primarily responsible for recently observed climate change.

The report concluded that even if humans immediately stopped emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, there would still be an additional 0.5 degree Fahrenheit (0.3 Celsius) of warming over this century compared today. The projected actual rise will be as much as 2 degrees Celsius. The result of the difference of half a degree is longer heat waves, more intense storms, higher sea levels and faster disintegration of coral reefs.

The study found that it is possible to attribute some extreme weather to climate change. The field of attribution science has advanced rapidly in recent years. It cites the European heat wave of 2003 and the record Australian heat wave of 2013 as episodes where relatively strong evidence showed a human contribution to extreme weather. Worldwide, the report found that it is extremely likely that more than half of the global mean temperature increase since 1951 can be linked to human influence.
In the US, the report concludes with very high confidence that the number and severity of cool nights has decreased since the 1960’s while the frequency and severity of warm days has increased. Extreme cold waves are less common since the 1980’s while extreme heat waves are more common. The average annual temperature in the US will continue to rise, making recent record-setting years relatively common in the near future. It projects increases of 5.0 to 7.5 degrees Fahrenheit by the late 2000’s, depending on the level of future emissions. The average rainfall across the US has increased by 4% since the beginning of the 20th century. Parts of the west, southwest and southeast are drying up while the southern plains and midwest are getting wetter. The report said that with a medium degree of confidence, human-caused warming is linked to rising temperatures over the western and northern US, but it found no link in the southeast.

What to do: Contact our MoC and (i) demand that the Administration release the report through its normal channels, and, (ii) demand that the Administration immediately address the issues relating to climate change, and, (iii) to join the Paris Accord NOW, and, (iv) direct the immediate reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in t