

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Ranking Member Katie Porter

#### Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

#### Hearing on “Why Expanding Medicaid to DACA Recipients Will Exacerbate the Border Crisis”

#### July 18, 2023

Thank you, Chairwoman McClain.

We’ve done some good hearings together this year. We’ve come together on a bipartisan basis to uncover the root causes behind the infant formula shortage. We’ve pointed out how bank regulators need oversight. And we’ve dug into the role of Chinese money laundering organizations in making drug cartels rich.

What do all of these hearings have in common? We’ve tackled real problems: deaths from fentanyl, scared parents unable to safely feed their babies, risk of collapse of our financial system. We’ve shown we are willing, on a bipartisan basis, to hold powerful people to account. We identified places where we need guardrails to make our government, our economy, and our country work better. And though we didn’t agree on everything, we came together on the big picture to achieve progress.

None of these things are true for today’s hearing, I’m afraid.

**Today, we are here to discuss a proposed Biden-Harris Administration rule. His Administration is committed to expanding health coverage to everyone lawfully present in the United States. Medicaid and Affordable Care Act plans are already available to people who are lawfully present in the United States. But under current federal rules, DREAMers are left out of the definition of “lawfully present.” President Biden’s proposed rule fixes that technicality.**

**Why would the President do that? Because, well, DACA recipients ARE—in fact—lawfully present—in the United States. There’s not a whole lot else to unpack. So what are the Republicans trying to do with this hearing? It isn’t oversight — because the ability to go to the doctor isn’t an abuse of power or an evasion of the law.**

The title of the hearing gives a clue: “Why Expanding Medicaid to DACA Recipients Will Exacerbate the Border Crisis.” Let’s look at the premise here. First, some facts. **Most DACA recipients already have healthcare coverage through their employers, just like other working age Americans. DREAMers work hard, pay taxes, and they get employer provided care.**

**So how many DREAMers would even get Medicaid under this new rule? About 13,000. About the size of one small town. And then other DREAMers would be able to buy healthcare on the exchanges. Just like everyone else who lives and works here in compliance with the law.**

**Somehow, letting people who live in America legally and pay their taxes buy healthcare is going to create a border crisis. It'd be funny to watch this bad argument fall apart if it weren't such a waste of time.**

This subcommittee has had great hearings under Ms. McClain's leadership. Those hearings held powerful people accountable, identified missing guardrails, and improved life for the people we serve. This hearing doesn't meet those standards.

Because what powerful people are we holding accountable here? If the Republicans kill this proposed rule, they take the promise of healthcare from people who generally aren't rich or well connected. These folks aren't using their powerful positions to abuse the system. They're regular people trying to get insurance so they can stay healthy.

Ok, then, so what missing guardrails are we identifying? None. **This hearing isn't about putting up guardrails, it's about ripping away a safety net. It's telling people who are lawfully present in the United States that they can't have access to healthcare.**

Ok, then, so does this hearing make life better for our constituents? All I can say is, anytime you're making it harder to buy healthcare, you're going to have a tough sell that you're in it for the people.

And honestly, that's why I think this hearing is framed to be about the border. **Most Americans want healthcare to be accessible. Most Americans want DREAMers to have a future in our country. But too many Republican lawmakers don't want either of these things, and they know they're not going to convince people by arguing against popular policies. Instead, they bring in buzzwords like "border crisis" to save the day.**

Republicans need to be able to defend the real reasons that they continue to oppose healthcare expansion if this is the hearing they want to have.

Otherwise, let's go back to serious oversight hearings. I've seen that Republicans can do it, and the American people deserve no less.

I yield back.

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