

**Testimony before US House of Representative, Committee Oversight Joint
Healthcare and Economic Growth Subcommittee**
September 18, 2013

The Honorable C.Bradley Hutto, South Carolina State Senator, Seat 40, representing Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton & Orangeburg Counties

I thank the distinguished members for allowing me the opportunity to address the issue of how the Affordable Care Act affects my rural district in South Carolina.

The Affordable Care Act would allow 350,000 to 400,000 South Carolinians to obtain health insurance. With Medicaid expansion an additional 200,000 South Carolina adults could be covered. It is appalling that some South Carolina officials continue to pursue efforts to block our citizens from receiving health care coverage. From his privileged place as an elected official and the child of an elected official, South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson has enjoyed tax payer-subsidized health care for most of his life. He has never had to worry about having a doctor to see when he got sick. Yet when it comes to allowing hundreds of thousands of South Carolinians to obtain much needed health coverage, he willingly leads the opposition without offering any constructive alternatives to their plight. In addition to the Republican Attorney General of my state offering no alternatives, the Republican-controlled state Senate is leading off the 2014 legislative session with a “nullification” bill in an attempt to void the Affordable Care Act. South Carolina tried nullification in the mid-eighteen hundreds. It didn’t work out so well then, and it won’t work now.

Without the expanded health coverage from the Affordable Care Act, uninsured South Carolinians will continue to be relegated to emergency rooms across the State or to simply suffer in pain without basic care. Treatment in an emergency room for non-emergent conditions is the most inefficient and most expensive form of care. Expanded coverage can allow the newly insured to find a medical home where they could be diagnosed and treated for basic human health needs that do not require the attention of an emergency room. Medical homes allow for patient focused preventive care such as coaching or counseling on nutrition and diet and physical activity in an holistic approach which will lead to cost effective health care.

It is shameful for us to live in the greatest country in the world, yet have our citizens face the threat of bankruptcy merely because they got sick or injured. Economic ruin should not be the price of having a sick child. By having more of our citizens covered with comprehensive insurance, premiums should be lower. We look forward to a time when all of our citizens can enjoy coverage similar to that enjoyed by our Attorney General. Some could be covered by expanding Medicaid, others by purchasing affordable coverage through the exchanges and yet others through their employment. It is this inclusive approach that will allow all South Carolinians to be covered.

Fully implementation of the Affordable Care Act benefits taxpayers. Without expanded coverage, the cost of paying for treatment of the uninsured falls on the taxpayers and employers. South Carolinians have paid federal taxes that can come home to South Carolina once the expansion is implemented. Once everyone is covered, medical cost will be easier to control and premium rates should fall.

As more people have health insurance coverage, more providers are needed. The expansion will result in an economic boost to South Carolina. The training of new providers will allow technical colleges and universities to grow. University based research has documented that an expected 44,000 new jobs would be created in South Carolina through an expansion. The salaries of the new employees and expanded services will generate millions in new annual earnings and ultimately in new revenue. This is in addition to the billions of dollars flowing from the federal government to the state over the next six years. Health care is a \$36 billion economic activity in South Carolina. It is almost 20% of total economy. With over 1,100 occupations, the health care sector employs over 250,000 South Carolinians in good jobs. Jobs built on caring for their neighbors. It is a vital economic sector. And these jobs are never outsourced.

The Affordable Care Act is a huge net benefit not just to those with pre-existing conditions, but to our State's taxpayers, to hospitals and doctors, to those who will gain by being newly employed, to the citizens who will see lower premiums, and all who will witness overall improvement in South Carolina's health and well being. Quite simply South Carolina needs to accept the benefits being extended to our citizens for no other reason that it is the right thing to do.