

The United States Supreme Court has emphatically stated what the law is relative to Health Care in the United States of America in upholding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. However, we sit here today continuously debating this law instead of working together to ensure that its implementation is beneficial to all states and all citizens.

In a state where almost 900,000 (20%) of Louisiana's population is uninsured and the health care budget has been cut by 10% each year, we cannot afford to decline any portion of the Affordable Health Care Act. Our Governor advocated us cutting one of the most vital healthcare services offered to citizens, our Hospice Care. As a State Representative, who Louisiana's citizens have entrusted with the duty to ensure that we do all we can to represent them I can not sit before you today in good moral conscience and advocate against the Affordable Care Act and its implementation in our state. For in doing so, I would be failing an overwhelming number of the constituency.

The Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals has neglected to mention that a report issued by her department reflects up to \$367.5 million in savings while offering healthcare to over 400,000 of our uninsured citizens. Our independent, nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Office arrived at an even higher savings figure from Medicaid expansion for our state of over \$550 million. DHH stands before you complaining today about the difficulty in implementation of the Insurance Exchange, however they have wasted time supporting failed measures at the state level to obstruct full implementation of the ACA instead of spending their time engaging the appropriate federal departments.

Louisiana spends well over \$600 million in uncompensated care yearly, mainly through DSH dollars that we continuously request from the federal government. We are one of the top 5 states who receive and expend DSH dollars. Independent reports reflect that the Affordable Care

Act will save the federal government approximately 50% of DSH dollars expended by 2019 with an immediate savings of approximately \$500 million in 2014.

Louisiana's economy, just like many other states, has suffered during these tough economic times. The full implementation of the Affordable Care Act offers an injection of \$26.8 Billion into our state's economy and would create over 47,000 jobs in Louisiana. It will further aid businesses by contributing greatly to a healthier, more productive workforce. The Federal Insurance Exchange is beneficial to those who currently pay insurance premiums by creating a more competitive market and driving down the cost of insurance premiums for everyone.

Somewhere, in Louisiana and all across this nation, there are younger versions of persons such as yourselves and me who desire to matriculate through institutions of higher learning without the added and unnecessary worry of being uninsured. The Affordable Health Care Act offers them access to the American Dream by allowing them to remain covered under the parent's premiums. They come from hardworking families and desire to study hard to become valuable and contributing citizens of this Nation. A repeal of this law would say to them, "we do not believe you should be afforded the opportunity to pursue your education without worrying about your health."

In each of our great states, there are families with children or sick parents who have been diagnosed with a life threatening disease and have been told that they have reached their mandatory maximum in benefits. Pre-Existing Conditions negated their ability to obtain new insurance policies. Their choice before the Affordable Care Act was to watch their loved ones suffer or die.

In Louisiana, as many other states, because of budget cuts some vital services are now classified as elective procedures instead of medically necessary. My colleagues and I have,

despite our efforts, known citizens who have died because they had no access to surgical procedures. The ACA changes this. Please allow our state the opportunity to offer them an alternative by accepting its implementation. Its what's right!!!!!!

A great man who fought for all Americans to have equal rights and equal access to services such as health care once said,

“On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? Conscience asks the question, is it right?

There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right.” **Dr.**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Members of this committee, I believe that each of our consciences speaks to us and tells us that it's right that we uphold and support a law that affords a family a way to keep from sitting and watching their loved one die when medical treatment is available. In that same belief I know that we can sometimes chose to ignore what's right because of what's popular or political.

However, if we chose to ignore what's right our **Lord Jesus Christ** has told each of us very plainly that, “that what we do to the least of these we also do to Him”

The ACA offers citizens an invaluable alternative to watching loved ones suffer and die!!!!

It's time to do what it is RIGHT!!!!