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Maya Wiley

June 28, 2025

Vote “NO” on Senate Reconciliation Bill and Reject Civil Rights Harms to Millions

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 240 national civil and human rights advocacy organizations, we write in strong opposition to the Senate budget reconciliation bill and urge you to vote “NO” on this measure. We had hoped the Senate would take a different path — one that rejected the harmful priorities of the House-passed H. Con. Res. 14 and centered the basic needs of everyday people. Instead, however, the Senate bill doubles down on the same dangerous and short-sighted agenda, prioritizing tax breaks for the wealthy while slashing vital programs that protect civil rights and promote health, education, and economic opportunity.

Rather than correcting the deeply inequitable framework advanced by the House, the Senate reconciliation bill continues to advance massive cuts to programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and student financial aid — programs that millions of Americans, especially communities of color and low-income families, rely on. At the same time, it boosts funding for punitive immigration enforcement, undermines access to education, and strips away civil rights safeguards across multiple sectors.

Specially, the Senate reconciliation bill:

Makes deep cuts to Medicaid, which Republican senators hope constituents will “get over,” despite such cuts eliminating a lifeline and critical care that benefits millions of Americans. The Senate’s Medicaid cuts go further than the House bill, continuing the largest cuts to Medicaid in American history and promising to devastate the health and financial security of millions of Americans, including children, families, seniors, people with disabilities, rural communities, and their hospitals. These historic cuts would disproportionately harm communities of color, nearly a third of whom rely on Medicaid for lifesaving care, including half of all children of color. Medicaid provides access to affordable medications and treatment, mental health services, and preventive care that help communities stay healthy. Slashing Medicaid to finance \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy and large corporations is not only fiscally irresponsible, but it is also morally indefensible. Medicaid is a cornerstone of access and equity in our health care system, covering a quarter of all Americans. Additionally, the bill makes cuts and changes to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that would make it more difficult for millions of low-income

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people to obtain Marketplace coverage. These cruel and unnecessary cuts to Medicaid and the ACA, including the addition of harmful red tape and bureaucratic requirements that will make it harder for people to access desperately needed health care, will threaten the health of people in every district and community across the country. Many of these cuts would be achieved by shifting unbearable substantial new costs and requirements to state and local governments.

Defunds Planned Parenthood, like the House bill, which will devastate access to essential health care for millions of people across the country. Planned Parenthood health centers provide critical, often lifesaving services like cancer screenings, birth control, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment, and general wellness care. Planned Parenthood reaches people who face systemic barriers to care, including those in rural, low-income, and underserved communities. The majority of Planned Parenthood patients rely on Medicaid and other federal and state programs to access care. Cutting off funding would not only close health centers, leaving many of these patients with nowhere to turn for essential care, but would also deepen health disparities and overwhelm an already strained health care system. In fact, Planned Parenthood's role in preventative care reduces long term health care costs and helps people maintain their ability to work, care for families, and contribute to their communities. Even though Medicaid funds are not used for abortion other than in rare exceptions, Medicaid funding is being used to target Planned Parenthood health centers and block people who rely on Medicaid from getting care at these trusted health centers. The attack on Planned Parenthood is not about fiscal responsibility; it is about advancing an extreme agenda that harms communities across this nation.

Doubles down on imposing cruel, shortsighted, and unprecedented cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which would upend access to food for millions of low-income families, children, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, rural communities, and people of color. These cuts, also aimed at financing tax breaks for the wealthiest households and corporations, would gut a vital program that helps more than 40 million people and disproportionately impacts communities already facing economic hardship. SNAP improves overall health outcomes, bolsters local economies, and helps close the wealth gap. Whether through slashing benefits, restricting eligibility, or shifting costs to states, the result would be the same: more hunger, more hardship, and greater inequality. SNAP is one of the most effective tools we have to address hunger in our communities, with nearly one in five children depending on it for daily nutrition. Any cuts to SNAP will jeopardize the ability of individuals and families to put food on their tables.

Continues to block as many as 20 million children from receiving the full Child Tax Credit (CTC) because their parents' earnings are too low or because one of their parents does not have a Social Security number. This legislation, which decimates programs and services that families rely on while giving tax handouts to corporations and billionaires, fails to expand the CTC to benefit kids whose families are struggling the most. While both the House and Senate reconciliation bills propose a modest expansion of the CTC for families with moderate and high incomes, they do nothing to improve this vital tax credit for millions of children who would be left out from receiving the full credit amount because their families' incomes are too low. Additionally, the Senate bill eliminates eligibility for about 2 million children who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents if one of their parents does not have a Social Security number.

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Significantly undermines college affordability and student borrower protections, particularly for students with middle-to-lower incomes who already face steep financial barriers to higher education. The Senate bill will push families toward riskier private loans that are inaccessible to many by eliminating the Grad PLUS loan program and imposing new restrictions on the Parent PLUS loan program. The bill also weakens or eliminates essential safeguards, including deferment options for borrowers facing economic hardship or unemployment and critical relief mechanisms like borrower defense to repayment and closed school discharge, which are tools that have provided redress to students defrauded by their institutions or impacted by school closures. The provisions would saddle millions of borrowers with unaffordable debt, diminish access to higher education, and limit the social and economic mobility that college is meant to provide. The bill's limits on graduate and parent borrowing would further push working families and students towards private loans, and its dismantling of consumer protections would not only jeopardize students' futures but also undermine the development of a strong and diverse workforce essential to a thriving economy.

Proposals such as the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA) provide tax breaks to wealthy filers in order to prop up private school voucher schemes, all while sidestepping the accountability and nondiscrimination obligations that govern public funding. Not only do these schemes undermine funding for the public schools on which 90 percent of children rely without providing the protections students are entitled to in public schools, they also redirect federal funding into private institutions that are not obligated to serve all students — particularly those with disabilities. Indeed, many private schools receiving vouchers can discriminate based on disability, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. This undermines the promise of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) while exacerbating segregation and inequality across the country. The Senate bill would inject massive funds to private education indefinitely at a time when federal grants are being cut from public schools and institutions.

Invests billions of dollars to create a mass deportation machine — like the House bill — that will trample on civil rights and civil liberties. The administration has already used wartime authorities to lock up hundreds of people overseas without due process and has planned to detain tens of thousands of immigrants at Guantanamo Bay and other military bases. It has revoked visas and locked up students purely on the basis of speech, in gross violation of the First Amendment. The administration wants to lock up countless more immigrants in facilities that are overcrowded and inhumane, further fueling the growth and profit of the private prison industry that benefits from the mass incarceration. At the same time, it wants to dramatically expand ICE's digital surveillance programs. Allocating billions of dollars to detention and deportation will not increase national security but will instead institutionalize fear, erode civil rights and civil liberties, and inflict lasting harm on individuals and communities.

Creates a new regressive and discriminatory remittance tax that targets immigrant workers. The Senate is following the lead of the House by imposing a new 3.5 percent tax on remittances, or individual transfers of money outside of the country. Remittances are most commonly sent by low- to moderate-income immigrants, particularly those of Latino or Asian descent. While the Senate attempts to address concerns about the remittance tax by applying it to both citizens and non-citizens and exempting transfers

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made through bank accounts and credit cards, the tax still targets cash and money order transfers, which are methods widely used by low-income immigrant communities and low-income people in general. This new tax would continue to impose a disproportionate burden on immigrant workers and their families, impose needless regulatory burdens on companies that provide transfer services, and drive consumers toward informal or unregulated money transfer methods that have a higher risk of fraud and other unlawful activity.

Imposes a moratorium on the enforcement of state laws and regulations on artificial intelligence (AI), which will undo progress that has been made to protect people from AI risks and harms. At a time when communities across the country are demanding clear safeguards for how AI is developed and used, states should not be denied their authority to act when Congress has refused to regulate. The latest version of the moratorium, which forces states to choose between regulating AI and receiving broadband funding, presents a false choice that no member of Congress should accept. Ultimately, a 10-year moratorium will prevent states from addressing AI harms — from deep fakes and disinformation to algorithmic discrimination — leaving people vulnerable and exposed to this technology. This moratorium means that the public will be left without redress when companies use an algorithm that can cause harm, when bad actors use AI to interfere with elections, and when scammers utilize the technology to take advantage of vulnerable communities. Instead of prioritizing constituents, Congress is prioritizing companies. By deflecting on passing federal protections and blocking the states from acting, Congress is allowing the tech industry to operate without checks and eliminating the existing civil rights safeguards in this space.

Furthermore, if Congress had its way, it would use reconciliation to further gut protections for working families and communities in service of an extreme, anti-civil rights agenda, all to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. From gutting the critical work of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and leaving millions vulnerable to abuse in the financial marketplace, to imposing cruel Medicaid cuts that punish states for providing health care to immigrants, the policies the Congress has sought to impose through reconciliation are as dangerous as they are far-reaching. Congress tried to create voucher schemes that undermine funding for public education to subsidize private school tuition. Congress has even attempted to weaken the power of federal courts by making it harder for them to enforce injunctions, including a provision that requires courts to set exorbitant and prohibitive bonds, shutting the courthouse doors to all but the wealthiest. But again, that is what reconciliation has proved to be about — benefiting the wealthiest. These provisions are a clear warning of what is possible if we let our guard down. As the reconciliation process unfolds, we will remain vigilant and continue to oppose any last-minute efforts to revive or insert these harmful policies that would inflict generational harm on our democracy, public health, and economic stability.

Finally, just as we advised the House, we continue to urge members not to advance a reconciliation bill, or any other budget or appropriations measure, until the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is thoroughly investigated and reined in. DOGE continues to operate with alarming secrecy and unauthorized access to sensitive personal data and use of AI systems from various agencies across the federal government. Federal courts have already issued injunctions curbing some of DOGE's overreach, citing violations of privacy laws and potential harm to millions of people, and


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Congress should intervene as well. Until DOGE's activities are stopped, made fully transparent, and held accountable, proceeding with reconciliation legislation risks further compromising people's privacy and undermining congressional budget authority and public trust. Congress must ensure that taxpayer dollars and personal data are protected from misuse before moving forward with any fiscal measures.

By using the reconciliation process to gut essential programs and services that people in every state and district rely on for essential health care, nutrition, education, and other basic needs,, the Senate, like the House, is turning its back on the people it is meant to serve. Rather than correcting the House's deeply harmful approach, the Senate has doubled down on the same misguided priority to take vital resources away from the 99 percent to give tax cuts to the 1 percent. The Congress is failing all of us as it harms communities, denies civil and human rights, deepens disparities, and abandons those most in need. The Senate must do better.

For these reasons, we urge you to reject the Senate reconciliation bill and vote "NO" on the measure. The Leadership Conference will score the Senate's vote in our Voting Record for the 119th Congress. If you have any questions, please be in touch with Kanya Bennett, managing director of government affairs, at bennett@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,



Jesselyn McCurdy
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs