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Attorney General, State Lawmakers and Health Care Advocates Call for Lowered Costs and Improved Health Care for Mainers

AG Frey, Legislators and Health Care Advocates Join Protect Our Care on the Nationwide “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour to Demonstrate the Urgent Need to Improve Health Care, Including Lower Costs of Prescription Drugs and Expanded Access to Care for Mainers



BANGOR, MAINE - This morning, Protect Our Care’s “Care Force One” arrived in Bangor to demonstrate the need for lowering Mainers’ health costs, expanding coverage, and reducing racial disparities in care. Headlined by Attorney General Aaron Frey and Senate President Troy Jackson, the event highlighted how Democrats are leading the charge to advance American health care and held Republicans accountable for continuing to reject measures to improve care and lower costs for Mainers.

Read Protect Our Care’s new report: Lower Costs, Better Care for Mainers [here](#).

Throughout the nationwide [“Lower Costs, Better Care”](#) bus tour, Protect Our Care is fighting to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation. These priorities include giving Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices for all Americans, getting more Americans covered by closing the Medicaid gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include hearing, dental, and vision, and further reducing health care premiums for millions of Americans who purchase coverage on their own.

You Can Watch the Event [Here](#).

Attorney General Aaron Frey framed the first stop on the nationwide tour, stating that, “We’re at a point where the Affordable Care Act just survived yet another challenge, this time by Republican attorneys general in other states.[...] We prevailed [in defending the ACA] but I don’t expect that that’s going to be the last effort. Since the Affordable Care Act was passed in 2010, almost like a dog to a bone there has been an effort by Republicans in Congress to find a way to undercut the access to meaningful health insurance that that provides. And what shocks the conscience is just how important access to health coverage is for so many individuals and families across our state, and across our nation.”

Senate President Troy Jackson emphasized that, “In this country we should have a system where healthcare is a right, not something out to the highest bidder. But unfortunately that’s what we have right now because Washington is broken. Big Pharma is able to push back, and Washington has to step up and do the right thing for the American people[...]: letting Medicare negotiate [...] and cap pharmaceuticals. We have to move forward and have a government that fights to protect the American people.”

"As a small state, we can't tackle this ourselves," said **State Representative Joe Perry**, who shared how Mainers, and folks across the country struggle to afford the prescription medication they need, even when they have health insurance. "It's going to take the leadership of the federal government. They are the only ones who can take this on in a meaningful way."

Cancer survivor **Laura Packard** shared her healthcare story: “When I was fighting stage 4 cancer, I had to forgo medication that would boost my immune system because the price tag was simply too high. I wound up in the hospital, and nearly died. Sadly, stories like these are all too common in our country. Patients should be able to focus on getting well, not struggling to pay for medications. That’s why we need Congress to act now to lower the cost of prescription drugs, including allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of all Americans.”

Chair of Maine Consumers for Affordable Health Care, **Lee Umphrey** said that, “It is a challenge because people make it political. And health care is not political.[...] One of the things the pandemic has taught is that affordable, accessible healthcare is even more important now.”

“This tour is giving Americans from all walks of life the opportunity to speak out about the pressing need to lower health care costs and improve care,” said **Protect Our Care State Director Vivian Mikhail**. “Mainers have the right to know whether their elected officials stand by

President Biden's agenda to improve health care for millions or if they side with Big Pharma and other special interests. When Congress returns this fall, we have a once in a generation opportunity to transform health care for the American people, including lowering prescription drug prices, closing the Medicaid coverage gap, and further reducing health costs for people purchasing coverage on their own. Care Force One is crisscrossing the country this summer making the case for getting this critical job done."

"Care Force One" will head to Vermont tomorrow, where Protect Our Care will be joined by Congressman Peter Welch and State Representative Taylor Small. For more information, please visit protectourcare.org/bus-tour/.

The Protect Our Care "Lower Costs, Better Care" Bus Tour is making stops in:

Bangor, Maine on Monday, August 9, 2021
Portland, Maine on Monday, August 9, 2021
Burlington, Vermont on Tuesday, August 10, 2021
Concord, New Hampshire on Wednesday, August 11, 2021
Teaneck, New Jersey on Friday, August 13, 2021
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on Thursday, August 12, 2021
New York, New York on Friday, August 13, 2021
New Brunswick, New Jersey on Monday, August 16, 2021
Scranton, Pennsylvania on Monday, August 16, 2021
Burlington County, New Jersey on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Wilmington, Delaware on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Dover, Delaware on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Morgantown, West Virginia on Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Youngstown, Ohio on Thursday, August 19, 2021
Columbus, Ohio on Thursday, August 19, 2021
Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Friday, August 20, 2021
Madison, Wisconsin on Friday, August 20, 2021
Parkersburg, West Virginia on Monday, August 23, 2021
Charleston, West Virginia on Monday, August 23, 2021
Raleigh, North Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Charlotte, North Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Columbia, South Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Atlanta, Georgia on Wednesday, August 25, 2021
Savannah, Georgia on Wednesday, August 25, 2021
Orlando, Florida on Thursday, August 26, 2021
Tampa, Florida on Thursday, August 26, 2021
Denver, Colorado on Monday, August 30, 2021
Flagstaff, Arizona on Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Phoenix, Arizona on Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Tucson, Arizona on Wednesday, September 1, 2021

San Diego, California on Thursday, September 2, 2021

Anaheim, California on Thursday, September 2, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada on Friday, September 3, 2021