

**Mayor Johnson, Rep. Mallow & Health Care Advocates Join Protect Our Care on the Nationwide “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour to Highlight the Urgent Need to Close the Medicaid Gap**



**Savannah, GA** - This afternoon, Protect Our Care’s “Care Force One” virtually stopped in Savannah to demonstrate the need for lowering Georgia’s health costs, expanding coverage, and reducing racial disparities in care. Headlined by Mayor Van Johnson and State Representative Derek Mallow, 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 Georgians.

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

Throughout the nationwide [“Lower Cost, 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](#).**

“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,” **said Laura Packard, national healthcare advocate**, “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.”

“Medicaid Expansion would create an estimated 56,000 jobs in Georgia including 12,000 jobs in rural communities. Adopting expansion could increase our state’s economic output by \$6.5 billion annually,” **said Savannah Mayor Van Johnson**. “Senators Warnock and Ossoff are stepping up and leading with a bold new approach for the federal government to close the expansion gap, and Congress should take action now to make it a reality. Georgians, and millions of people across the country have waited long enough.”

“A large percentage of our population in the Savannah/Chatham County area could benefit from Medicaid Expansion because they are living at, or below, the Federal Poverty Level or are uninsured. So this work is extremely important to our community. It is the right time and our citizens need it,” **said Alicia Johnson, Executive Director of Step Up Savannah**.

“Our Governor likes to tout that Georgia is the best state to do business in, but it’s also the number one state for poor people to die in because people can not find access to basic, quality, affordable healthcare, ” **said State Representative Derek Mallow**. “While Georgia has a record breaking surplus in our coffers, however, our state will not, and is not, talking about expanding Medicaid in the state of Georgia. As the pandemic rages on, the most vulnerable are the folks on the frontline lines - those in the service industry, groceries stores, gas stations- who are putting their lives on the line every day and exposing themselves only to realize that if they go to the hospital, they won’t be covered. Let’s continue to fight for everyone to have affordable access to healthcare coverage.”

“Expanding and improving American health care has never been more critical, **said Protect Our Care Georgia State Director Liz Ernst**. “President Biden and Democrats in Congress are leading the charge to lower health care costs and expand coverage by fighting for lower prescription drug prices, getting more Americans covered by closing the Medicaid gap, and further reducing health care premiums for millions of Americans. It’s imperative that Congress enact these provisions this fall to give Americans much-needed relief -- it’s not only smart policy but it’s the right thing to do.”

Tomorrow, “Care Force One” will head to Orlando, Florida, where Protect Our Care will be joined by Congress members Darren Soto and Val Demings. For more information, please visit [protectourcare.org/bus-tour/](https://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 Thursday, August 12, 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