

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-elect
1401 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden:

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that all Americans have the support they need to obtain comprehensive, affordable health coverage. For almost a year, we have watched the Trump administration's response to this crisis ignore public health guidance and cast the needs of Wisconsinites aside. I write to urge you to immediately open a special enrollment period (SEP) for the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) online marketplace, and to restore funding for the Navigator Program and the ACA's outreach and enrollment efforts.

More Americans are uninsured today than when President Trump took office.¹ During his time in office, he has sought to undermine access to comprehensive coverage, including by cutting back the open enrollment period for the ACA's marketplace and slashing funding for outreach and enrollment and the Navigator Program.² During the COVID-19 pandemic, this sabotage has continued. Time and again, the Trump administration played politics and ignored public health guidance by refusing to open a SEP.³ Millions of Americans have become uninsured this year⁴, and it is heartless that President Trump locked out the uninsured and underinsured from accessing the health coverage they desperately needed during an unprecedented public health crisis.

Over half-a-million Wisconsinites have contracted COVID-19, and nearly every Wisconsinite has been impacted by the ongoing economic crisis caused by the pandemic.⁵ Thousands of uninsured and underinsured Wisconsinites are anxious, not only about what the possibility of contracting COVID-19 could mean for their health and that of their family, but also for their financial stability. An immediate SEP, paired with restored outreach funding and support for the Navigator Program, would give Wisconsin families a level of reassurance and security that has

¹ <https://khn.org/news/number-of-americans-without-insurance-rises-in-2018/>

² <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2020/10/09/six-ways-trump-has-sabotaged-the-affordable-care-act/>

³ <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/03/31/trump-obamacare-coronavirus-157788>

⁴ <https://familiesusa.org/resources/the-covid-19-pandemic-and-resulting-economic-crash-have-caused-the-greatest-health-insurance-losses-in-american-history/>

⁵ <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/data.htm>

been absent during President Trump's time in office. States, including Wisconsin, stand ready to work with you during a SEP.⁶ Families already struggling to make ends meet in light of the global pandemic need and deserve comprehensive, affordable health insurance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "B".

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

⁶ <https://oci.wi.gov/Pages/PressReleases/20201223Pres-electBiden.aspx>