

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Full Committee Markup of the Committee Print on Legislation
Regarding the Committee’s Instruction Pursuant to Section 2002
(a)(1) of S.Con.Res. 11.
Budget Reconciliation
September 30, 2015
10:30 a.m.**

Thank you, Chairman Kline.

Today the Committee will consider and inevitably report out a bill that represents only a small part of a larger budget reconciliation package.

We need to therefore be completely clear on what the Committee is in fact considering today. This Committee will take yet another vote to determine whether we want to continue on the path where the sole aim is the systematic destruction of the Affordable Care Act. More specifically, we will vote on whether or not we want support a budget reconciliation process that seeks to take away health insurance from millions of Americans.

This is not a new exercise. The Majority in Congress has been at this for five years – trying to chip away at the Affordable Care Act and undermine the progress we’ve made in providing health coverage for all American families. We’ve seen 60 repeal votes, multiple lawsuits, and countless attacks, all with the same goal of turning the clock backwards on the progress we’ve made. This time it’s through the budget reconciliation process, but the idea is not new.

In 2010 when Congress passed and President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, we did so to change to trajectory that we were on and to improve a system that had left millions of Americans out in the cold, left many without any consumer protections in health coverage, and classified being a woman as a preexisting condition, enabling insurance companies to charge women more than men. If you lost your job, you would lose your health coverage and if you had a preexisting condition, you were out of luck. If you wanted to start a new business but you and your family relied on your employer-provided coverage, then too bad, you were stuck at your job. If you were a senior that hit

the Part D prescription drug donut hole, then you had no help in affording your medications.

In many areas, I believe we have made great progress in improving a system that didn't work for many American families. For example, the passage of the Affordable Care Act has given millions of Americans access to health insurance coverage, many for the first time in their lives. The ACA is closing the donut hole for seniors, improved coverage options for young people, and has encouraged and improved access to mental health services and preventive care. Further, it's helped slow the growth in health care costs, resulting in the lowest annual increase in health care spending since the government began tracking the statistic in 1960. And new research conducted by Kaiser found that the average premium for employer-based family coverage is also growing more slowly in recent years.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that a New York Times article from July 16, 2013 showing that health premiums decreased for individuals in New York by 50%, be entered into the record.

I have said in this Committee before that budgeting requires making tough choices, and a budget is in fact a reflection of priorities. As legislators, we decide what our priorities are and how to best invest in our country. And since the bill we are considering today is being presented to us for inclusion into a budget reconciliation package, I want to make sure that one major priority is crystal clear – and that is protecting access to health insurance for ALL Americans. And if this reconciliation package saves money, it is because fewer people will be covered by health care insurance.

Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.