

Communicating in the Political Climate-focusing on issues not party

Montana Nurses Association (MNA) remains bipartisan and sustains advocacy and support addressing healthcare and other legislative issues through our MNA Government Relations Platform, our legislative platform, approved by MNA membership. MNA is the recognized professional organization, which lobbies for nursing practice issues to protect the practice of professional nurses and also protect the public in all areas of health care. MNA focuses on the issues surrounding nurses and all that affects healthcare.

A review of our MNA Mission Statement reflects this commitment. MNA mission statement: *The Montana Nurses Association promotes professional nursing practice, standards and education; represents professional nurses; and provides nursing leadership in promoting high quality health care.*

I am also calling attention to some of the very progressive and forward thinking positions of our 2017-2018 MNA Government Relations Platform, approved by the MNA House of Delegates October 2017 (italics below). Encompassed in our government relations platform these selected positions drive our communications with those who have an effect on healthcare to include local, state, and national leaders and organizations. For full Government relations platform go to www.mtnurses.org. Here are highlights from our platform related to healthcare for all.

Improve access to quality, cost effective health care by developing and/or supporting public policies which:

- *Respond to the needs of the unserved and underserved populations by promoting access to health care and healthcare coverage.*
- *Identify or develop alternative health care delivery systems that are cost-effective and provide quality health care.*
- *Remove barriers (financial, governmental, regulatory, and/or institutional) that deny access to appropriate/qualified health care providers and approved medical standard of care treatments.*
- *Advocate for legislation that is transparent and bipartisan and support policies that can achieve evidence based real healthcare reform.*
- *Promote community and world health by collaborating with other health professionals to promote health diplomacy and reduce health disparities.*

Protect human rights by developing and/or supporting public policies which:

- *Promote access to appropriate health services.*
- *Preserve individual rights to privacy.*
- *Promote, debate and have consideration of ethical dilemmas in health care*

Protect the environmental health of individuals and communities through:

- *Acknowledging, supporting and addressing environmental impacts on the health of Montanans.*
- *Actively engaging with national organizational affiliates in addressing environmental health issues in our nation.*

- *Identify the nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.*

Protecting and promoting the future healthcare and nursing practice through:

- *Actively engaging in legislation that supports professional scope of nursing practice to the full extent of individual education and training.*
- *Actively promoting programs and efforts that encourage educational progression of professional nursing at state and national levels.*
- *Representation on boards, committees and advisory groups which influence the future of the nursing profession and the future of our state and national healthcare system.*
- *Engaging with healthcare partners and associations to work collaboratively to ensure healthcare as a right for all American populations.*

Utilizing our government relations platform as a guide, MNA has reached out and will continue to reach out to our US Congressmen, for feedback and collaboration on nursing and healthcare issues. We have communicated concerns regarding the recent tax bills and the current "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act" law and the effects these changes in law (or any law for that matter ex: ACA repeal) will have on healthcare, our nurses and our citizens.

Our concerns frequently align with MNA's national affiliates, the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the American Federation of Teachers/Nurses and Health Professionals (AFTNHP). MNA is able to provide input and be a part of the process to evaluate and learn about the consequences new laws, being made at the national level, have on our state.

I want to share (below) three evidence based communications we utilized and assisted with from our national affiliates (relevant based on date of the articles). I have previously shared these communications with both of our US Senators and our US House Representative in regards to the tax bills, while being mindful of our legislative platform.

I.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 18, 2017

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STATEMENT:

American Nurses Association Strongly Opposes the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act
Massive tax bill will significantly reduce the number of Americans with health insurance

Silver Spring, MD – *The following statement is attributable to Pamela F. Cipriano, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, president of the American Nurses Association (ANA), in response to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.*

“The American Nurses Association is deeply concerned about the devastating impact that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will have on health care in this country. Under the guise of a promise to slash taxes for corporations and middle-class Americans is a clear intent to dismantle the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which has helped nearly 16 million Americans obtain health coverage. It is also no secret the actions that will be pursued to make up for the inflated deficit caused by this tax bill will be the cutting of essential anti-poverty programs as well as Medicare and Medicaid.

Eliminating the ACA’s individual mandate will lead to an estimated 13 million fewer Americans having health insurance. The resulting domino effect will be negative health outcomes, higher costs, and fewer individuals with access to critical primary care and preventive services. This is irresponsible and further proves that health care is being handled like a political game to be won at any cost. Frustratingly, this bill was pushed through without input from patients, consumers, or health care experts, including the country’s 3.6 million registered nurses, whom the public ranks as the [most ‘honest and ethical’ profession.](#)

Amid numerous failed attempts to ‘repeal and replace’ the ACA, [ANA voiced strong opposition](#) to legislation that would threaten health care affordability, access, and delivery for millions of people across the nation. ANA will continue to advocate for a [health system that ensures universal access](#) to a standard package of essential health care services for all citizens and residents.”

<http://nursingworld.org/>_____

II.

December 18, 2017

KEY TALKING POINTS:

Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

OVERVIEW

Please feel free to customize and tailor these talking points when speaking to key audiences about the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act

The American Nurses Association is deeply concerned about the devastating impact that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will have on health care in this country and strongly opposes the bill.

- *There is clear intent to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, which has helped nearly 16 million Americans obtain health coverage.*
- *The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act eliminates the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate and will result in an estimated 13 million fewer Americans having health insurance as well as negative health outcomes, higher costs, and fewer individuals with access to critical primary care and preventive services.*
- *Funding for essential anti-poverty programs, Medicare, and Medicaid will be significantly cut to make up for the inflated deficit that will be caused by this tax bill.*
- *The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is being pushed through without input from patients, consumers or health experts, including the country's 3.6 million registered nurses, whom the public ranks as the [most 'honest and ethical' profession](#).*
- *[The American Nurses Association \(ANA\) has voiced strong opposition](#) to legislation that would threaten health care affordability, access, and delivery for millions of people across the nation.*
- *The American Nurses Association will continue to advocate for a [health system that ensures universal access](#) to a standard package of essential health care services for all citizens and residents.*

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

The American Nurses Association urges congress to move quickly on funding re-authorization for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) - a federal-state program that provides health insurance to 9 million children in the U.S.

- Federal spending authorization for CHIP ran out on September 30th and 16 states – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, California, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Minnesota, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Florida, Massachusetts, Delaware, and New Hampshire – anticipate running out of funding by the end of January 2018.
- With the help of CHIP, American children have access to critical health care services that include routine checkups, immunizations, doctor visits, prescriptions, dental and vision care, inpatient and outpatient hospital care, laboratory and x-ray services, and emergency services.
- CHIP has helped reduced the rate of uninsured American children by roughly 5 percent.

American Nurses Association

<http://nursingworld.org/>

III.

Dear Montana Senators and House Representative,

November 1, 2017

Montana Nurses Association and affiliate AFT/Nurses and Health Professionals support tax policies that are based on a fair share distribution of taxation; encourage job creation, assist the working poor and middle-class achieve economic security and dignity; and provide adequate revenues to support social services, government investment in our communities and access to affordable health care for children, families and the elderly.

The tax plan released by President Trump and GOP leaders in September 2017 would cost \$2.4 trillion in revenue over 10 years, according to the non-partisan Tax Policy Center. This plan:

- Eliminates the state and local tax deductions that allow Americans to deduct from their federal taxes the amount they pay in state and local taxes;
- Eliminates the estate tax, which affects only those estates valued at more than \$5.5 million;
- Gives the top 1% in America 80% of the tax breaks by year 10, cutting their taxes an average of \$207,000 a year;
- Cuts corporate taxes, giving large corporations and businesses a \$2.6 trillion tax cut—70% of corporate tax cuts benefit wealthier Americans.
- Increases the tax burden on middle class taxpayers - 3 out of 10 middle-class taxpayers (making \$55,000-\$93,000) in America would pay \$1,300 more in taxes, on average, by year 10;
- Pays for these tax cuts by cutting government revenue by \$2.4 billion over 10 years, leading to massive cuts in public services.

A proposal to eliminate state and local tax deductions would put pressure on state and local budgets that now support our schools and local services. Nearly 44 million Americans in all 50 states currently use the state and local tax deduction, which help many families achieve home ownership and economic security.

Repealing the state and local taxes would raise taxes for 23% of Montana taxpayers, and make it more difficult for our state to raise the revenue needed to adequately fund public services such as our schools. Other changes in federal policy being discussed to accompany the tax changes would lead to deep cuts in Medicaid, Medicare and income security programs that would create a financial crisis for our state, dramatically reducing funds available for Montana residents on Medicaid, CHIP, Medicare, food benefits, Pell Grants and our veterans.

Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy

Instead of meeting the needs of working and middle class Americans, current GOP proposals would cut social and economic programs in order to give tax cuts to large corporations and the wealthy through the elimination of the estate tax, which benefits those with estates of more than \$5 million; and the lowering of corporate taxes while maintaining loopholes and creating a massive new loophole for wealthy individuals through a change in the top “pass-through” tax rate.

In Montana, the proposed tax cuts would:

- give 57% of the 2018 tax cuts to our richest 1%, - only 5,300 Montana taxpayers.
- 14% of households would get a \$1,510 tax increase, on average, in 2018.

- 11% of households making \$38,400 to \$60,400 would get a \$670 tax increase, on average.
- 24% of households making \$60,400 to \$99,300 would get a \$1,230 tax increase, on average.

In summary, instead of focusing on tax cuts that benefit only the wealthiest in our country at the expense of the majority of American families, we ask that you support comprehensive tax reform that:

- Preserves state and local tax deductions
- Closes corporate loopholes and ensures that large corporations and Wall Street pay their fair share of taxes
- Maintains and expands vital health programs like Medicare and Medicaid
- Makes the wealthiest pay their fair share

Sources

<https://itep.org/> and <https://americansfortaxfairness.org/>
<https://view.publitas.com/p222-14698/americans-against-double-taxation-announcement-release-1/page/1>

<https://itep.org/trumpgopplan/>

http://allin.rtp.aft.org/sites/default/files/article_pdf_files/2017-10/fs_tax-reform_101817.pdf

Joint statement by MNA and AFTNHP November 17, 2017

These are examples of working collaboratively with our affiliates and bringing evidence based data forward to our congressmen regarding the impacts on nursing and healthcare issues. We need to become informed and continue to advocate for quality healthcare for all through our professional associations and for our communities, especially when the impact on Montana and American populations is not advantageous.

Senator Tester voted against and Senator Daines and Representative Gianforte voted in favor of the current "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act". I have asked and will continue to ask Senator Daines and Representative Gianforte for their evidence to reassure Montanans that it will not impact funding for and from Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. I have asked for their rationale and talking points to defend their vote on the current tax law as it relates to healthcare. For example, here is current data on the elimination of the individual mandate/tax penalty for failure to buy health insurance. Although congress has yet to fully repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) they did manage to eliminate the tax penalty for individuals that do not buy health insurance. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that 4 million people would drop their health insurance plans in 2019, rising to 13 million by 2027, without the mandate. And that's just the start. One analysis* shows how the elimination of the individual mandate could cause some state marketplaces to collapse. That could force Congress to act on the ACA again this year. *(<https://www.axios.com/gop-may-have-no-choice-but-to-try-health-care-again-after-taxes-2513940879.html>)

We continue to work with those who will work with us addressing issues related to our nursing profession and quality accessible healthcare. We appreciate when the US Congressmen, and MT lawmakers for that matter, reach out to us for our input and recommendations regarding healthcare reform and any legislation that would affect nurses, the nursing profession or healthcare in any way.

I have been reassured by both US Senators and the US House Representative that they support the reauthorization of CHIP and we must all hold them responsible and accountable to make sure that happens as soon as possible.