

Statement for the Record
Rules Committee Statement of Representative Allyson Y. Schwartz (PA-13)
Re: Amendment Sponsored by Rep. Schwartz to H. Con. Res. 34
April 13, 1011

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on my amendment to H. Con. Res. 34. My amendment would protect our nation's seniors from the devastating cuts to the Medicaid program included in the Republicans' 2012 budget resolution. It maintains \$771 billion over 10 years to ensure that senior citizens and persons with disabilities will not lose critical financial assistance through the Medicaid program to cover the costs of nursing home care, home- and community-based services that provide seniors with better alternatives to expensive institutional care, and assistance with premiums and out-of-pocket costs for low-income Medicare beneficiaries.

In addition to draconian cuts and changes to Medicare, this budget aims to take away Medicaid for the nearly 6 million seniors who depend on it for their nursing home or long-term care. Republicans proudly say they will cut funding to states by \$1 trillion. Republicans call this proposal flexibility for states but in fact it is just shifting the cost to seniors and limiting their access to quality health care.

For decades, Medicaid has been a lifeline for older Americans in the frailest years of their life, providing quality and affordable health coverage to the elderly. But House Republicans are trying to slash Medicaid coverage for seniors who need long-term care—threatening our sickest seniors in nursing homes. In Pennsylvania, nearly 40 percent of funds spent on long-term care would be at risk. This threatens the 62 percent of nursing home residents and 25,000 Pennsylvania seniors who receive home health services through the Medicaid program. This is the absolute wrong approach to solving our nation's budget problems.

Medicaid helps millions of seniors afford their health care by helping to pay their Medicare premiums. Slashing this program by \$1 trillion will shift the financial burden to seniors and families, saddling them with a mountain of new health care costs. These are seniors with the most serious debilitating conditions who worked hard all their lives and have exhausted their life savings in order to cover their health care costs. They have sold their homes and spent their retirement savings – they have given up everything to cover their own care. America's seniors are not looking for a handout – they are looking for the security they have earned and we have promised.

Additionally, with capped grants that will decline in value, states will be forced to cut provider reimbursement. This is a virtual guarantee that more providers would be driven out of the system and disabled and frail elderly Americans would be placed on waiting lists for services or have no access to coverage at all.

Last year we took great steps to control health care costs while expanding access and strengthening benefits for seniors. Republicans are not only undermining that progress but dismantling Medicaid and Medicare as we know it. I urge my colleagues to support seniors across America by supporting this amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record. I request your favorable consideration of my amendment.