



## **HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH ARE ON THE LINE AND ON THE BALLOT**

*We need the protections of the Affordable Care Act now more than ever*

Amidst the pandemic and the egregious inequities it has amplified, particularly for people most vulnerable even before COVID-19, we are all trying to stay focused on what matters, despite the misinformation overload in the countdown to the election. Each hour brings contradictory, bizarre, and too often, alarming headlines.

So while our heads may be swiveling, we cannot look away from the essential fact: healthcare is at stake.

Our personal and family health, public health, and civic health are in danger as they've been in no other election in our lives.

We aren't going to stand by and allow 40 years of work to be unraveled, dismissed, and harmfully repositioned -- and we know that you won't either.

FUTURES came into being with the understanding that healthcare was an essential factor in supporting survivors and ending violence.

We showed that domestic violence "behind closed doors" is *not* a private matter, but in fact, an urgent public health crisis, causing lifelong adverse health and economic consequences for those exposed. We've learned that children will bear these health burdens from trauma and violence for their entire lives -- unless we lift up pathways to healing and thriving when we reach them in time.

Most of all, we advanced evidence and programs showing that violence is a learned behavior. It can be unlearned, addressed, and prevented - and healthcare providers are key.

For 40 years, we have combined activism with evidence, and with our partners, helped secure passage of major legislation to support survivors, children, and families representing the diversity of households and communities we serve. At stake in this election:

- **The Affordable Care Act (ACA)** made it possible for women to be screened and receive services for domestic violence as part of routine preventative care; ended the ability of insurers to deny healthcare coverage to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse, and perhaps most importantly, expanded health care, including mental

health care, to more than 20 million people, many of whom are low-income women who are greater risk for domestic and sexual violence. The ACA also helped to reduce higher rates of uninsurance in communities of color.

- The **Heroes Act**, which the current administration now refuses to negotiate, includes emergency funding for domestic violence shelters, for victims of crime, for a renewal and expansion of landmark child abuse legislation, in addition to desperately needed funds to help schools re-open safely, and to help parents keep their jobs and pay rent during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hearings are scheduled to begin next week for the confirmation of federal judge Amy Coney Barrett, who has written critically about the ACA on numerous occasions, to the Supreme Court seat held by the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Her nomination is being rushed in no small part so she can be confirmed in time to hear a Supreme Court case on November 10 that could invalidate the Affordable Care Act, costing tens of millions of people their healthcare in the midst of the pandemic and all other mental and physical health concerns that haven't simply ceased since Covid-19 began taking lives.

Let's be clear: it is beyond reckless to eliminate the ACA at this time. With more than 210,000 Americans dead from COVID-19, and another seven million who survived the virus left with a pre-existing condition, losing the ACA will add to the cruel inequities in the health and healthcare options for many of us – specifically Black and Brown Americans who have been disproportionately affected. What's more, it will cut off millions who have become unemployed, from their employer-provided coverage.

With the increased risk for domestic and sexual violence during this pandemic, there is no worse time to cut off anyone's healthcare, and the lifeline that healthcare providers can offer survivors by connecting them to vital services.

VOTE in this election as though your life, the lives of those you love, and -- if you care as we do about ending all violence and health inequities -- as if your life's work depends on it.

It's all at stake.

Thank you for standing with us