



**COLORADO
CROSS-DISABILITY
COALITION**

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DISABLED IMPLORE GARDNER TO STOP SECOND EUGENICS MOVEMENT

(Denver, CO) -- The release of the Senate "Discussion Draft" of the health care bill has done nothing to allay the fear of people with disabilities that rely on Medicaid for long-term care who fear they will become collateral damage. This is why more than 40 disabled people were moved to get arrested in the US Capitol yesterday. The ability to live independently in the community, to be allowed to contribute, and to be as productive as possible are American values that must not be a pawn in partisan gridlock. Long-term disability services make up over 40% of the Medicaid budget and have nothing to do with the Affordable Care Act.

The Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (CCDC) agrees with Senator Cory Gardner that health care is a serious issue and that "knee jerk reactions" are not appropriate. We agree that any major health care overhaul calls for serious debate. Serious debate must include:

- Meetings with various health care policy experts.
- Meetings with various segments of the health care industry.
- Meetings with Governors and state Medicaid agency administrators.
- Most importantly, meetings with groups of people that will be most affected, like people with disabilities of all ages that rely on Medicaid for long-term care.

The outcome of these meetings must be thoughtful amendments drafted and studied by Senators from both sides of the aisle. After amendment language is drafted, hearings need to be held so Senators can decide which amendments are good public policies. There are always unintended consequences when amendments are pushed through on the floor without careful study and extensive outside input from those whose daily lives and personal liberty are dependent upon those systems.

The above steps cannot occur in a month, let alone before July 4th. To avoid a knee-jerk reaction, CCDC asks Senator Gardner to please vote no if the vote happens in the next week, or even this summer. There are numerous details to be worked out and the people of Colorado and across the country



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whose lives depend on Medicaid need to understand what this bill will do, and should be able to discuss this with our elected representatives in detail. The only way to stop knee-jerk and partisan reactions is to assure full citizen involvement in the process, and to engage in the democratic process which will involve give and take.

Moreover, CCDC urges Senators Gardner and Bennet to lead a bipartisan coalition with the bipartisan Governors' including Colorado's Governor John Hickenlooper to craft a bill that will solve the very real problems of the Affordable Care Act, and improve Medicaid without hurting the most vulnerable. We know how to work together in Colorado—lets' show the rest of the country how to control costs without hurting people.

What CCDC knows about the proposed Senate health care bill is that it will likely result in a second eugenics movement aimed at the disabled and elderly whose expenses are too high and do not fit into the cap set by the federal government. Colorado cannot make up over \$340 million the first year of cuts or more than \$14 billion over ten years. Colorado Medicaid is already cost effective and flexible. People will die—some quickly, some slowly—but enactment of the Senate bill will create a eugenics movement. That is why people were willing to put their bodies and lives on the line to defend the most basic of American and civil liberties. That this bill was released on the anniversary of the [Olmstead](#) decision, where the US Supreme Court said people with disabilities have a fundamental right to live in the community and that isolation in institutions is illegal segregation in many cases—sends a message that cannot be ignored.

CCDC welcomes a chance to have a meaningful conversation with Senator Gardner to figure out a way to avoid this frightening outcome. We believe it is possible if Senator Gardner will stand with Colorado and most Americans and vote no so we can have a reasonable process to fix the real problems with our health care system. In May ADAPT Activist Dawn Russell said to Senator Gardner that everything that matters to us is in his hands. Video of the meeting can be seen [here](#). Senator Gardner, please—the disability community implores you to save our lives and vote no.