

Dear :

Thirty-five years ago I knew nothing about disabilities, and even less Medicaid. Then I gave birth to my first child.

Even to a new mother, my son's developmental disabilities were apparent immediately as he missed one developmental milestone after the other. He was soon diagnosed with an intellectual disability and cerebral palsy, and eventually Autism and psychiatric disorders. So began years of doctors appointments, medical testing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, feeding therapy and psychiatric treatment. Later, two of his younger siblings were diagnosed with other disabilities. The bills mounted as we exceeded the limitations of our commercial insurance.

When my son turned eighteen we went to our local Social Security office to apply for SSI. He gained Medicaid coverage and enrolled in the Home and Community Based waiver. Now as an adult, Medicaid covers not only his medical, dental, and psychiatric needs, but also provides him with workers who help him to live in his own apartment and to have a job. He leads a life of dignity and self-worth as a contributing member of society, thanks to the men and women who show up at his door, and at his job, to help him with his household chores, shopping and meal preparation, personal care and toileting, to teach him about safety at home and in the community, to take him out to engage in socialization and recreation, and to help him learn the skills to perform his job.

The proposed changes to Medicaid included in the American Health Care Act have the potential to severely limit, or completely obliterate, the services that my son, and millions of others, depend upon. The cuts and changes to Medicaid proposed in this Act will force states to ration healthcare and Long Term Services and Supports. Many people will be deemed ineligible. Others will face draconian cuts to service.

And if that isn't bad enough, the dedicated workers who provide much needed care though they receive low wages, will not only face losing their jobs, but may possibly face losing their own Medicaid eligibility under this Act. We will live in a nation where millions who need care can't get it, and millions who want to give care can't give it.

There are those who may say that people who benefit from Medicaid take their supports for granted. For this family, and for many others, nothing could be further from the truth. On the contrary, we say "God Bless America."

Please use all the power at your disposal to ensure that the American Health Care Act never becomes law.

Sincerely,

Shelley M. Klein