

AAPD Strongly Condemns Senate Proposal That Slashes Medicaid and Threatens Disabled Lives

by [Jess Davidson](#) | Jun 25, 2025 | [Health](#), [Press Release](#)

For Immediate Release: June 25, 2025

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) strongly condemns the Senate Finance Committee’s recently released budget reconciliation proposal, which makes devastating cuts to Medicaid that will disproportionately harm disabled people across the country. The proposal guts funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), creates needless paperwork requirements that will push eligible individuals out of Medicaid, and imposes requirements that are proven to fail to improve employment and healthcare outcomes.

This proposal is a direct assault on the civil and human rights of disabled Americans. Medicaid is a lifeline that enables millions of disabled people to live and work in their homes and communities rather than in institutions. Disabled people already struggle to have consistent access to personal attendant care and direct support work. Care workers currently face lack of job security and low wages.

When combined, this creates an ongoing national care worker crisis, which would only deepen if the Senate proposal passes. Receiving care at home enables disabled people to live at home instead of being forced into an institution. If this bill passes, our nation will see an increase in unnecessary institutionalization, and disabled people will be denied the basic dignity of living independent, self-directed lives.

The bill puts community engagement requirements on certain Medicaid enrollees, requiring them to work, volunteer, or be enrolled in an educational program for at least 80 hours a month. The inclusion of work requirements in the bill for people ages 19-64 is particularly harmful and is a policy specifically designed to decrease the number of people receiving Medicaid. Research has shown that such requirements do not improve employment rates, but do cause harm by penalizing people for losing their job.

When workers lose their jobs, they lose their Medicaid because of these penalties. People with chronic illnesses, mental health disabilities, or fluctuating health conditions or employment situations are especially vulnerable to being dropped from coverage due to job loss penalties and administrative burdens. In many cases, the employment supports

provided through Medicaid are what enable people with disabilities to be able to work in the first place.

Without employment supports, such as assistance getting ready for and transporting to work, occupational therapy, or other job assistance, many people will be forced off of Medicaid and unable to work, leading to certain financial devastation. Finally, the resources that states will be required to use to implement these bureaucratic policies will cause further [delay in access to critical health, financial, and food support for all Americans](#), not just people on Medicaid.

In addition, the proposal's requirement that Medicaid recipients re-certify their eligibility every six months is a particularly burdensome barrier to care. Many people with disabilities lack consistent access to the identification and medical documents needed to meet such requirements. Additionally, many Medicaid recipients do not have a computer, smartphone, broadband internet, or reliable transportation to assist with navigating complex administrative systems. These requirements will lead to widespread disenrollment from Medicaid, not because people are no longer eligible, but because the system makes it too hard to stay enrolled.

The Senate Finance Committee's proposal also contains billions of dollars in cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps millions of low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities afford to buy groceries each month. The plan also shifts 5% to 15% of SNAP benefit costs to the states, which will force many states to make difficult budget decisions to reduce benefits or cut other vital programs instead. We know that when states face budget shortfalls, disability programs are often the first programs to get cut.

“These proposed Medicaid cuts are not only cruel and unprecedented — they are extremely dangerous,” **said Maria Town, AAPD President and CEO.** “The Senate's budget reconciliation proposal doubles down on the harms contained in the House bill, cutting hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicaid. This will only worsen the care crisis and increase our national debt at the expense of society's most vulnerable members. People with disabilities, older adults, and low-income communities will pay the price with their health, their independence, and in too many cases, their lives.”

In addition to the significant barriers to Medicaid and SNAP access, AAPD is concerned about several other provisions of the Senate Finance Committee's proposed bill.

The proposed bill includes a moratorium that would block all state and local governments from enforcing any law or regulation governing artificial intelligence (AI) for the next 10 years — including existing laws. State laws creating safeguards against exploitative AI

mental health chatbots and misuse of patient data and as well as state laws prohibiting algorithmic discrimination in employment, housing, banking, and benefits determinations have provided necessary protection for disabled people and others who are at extreme risk for algorithmic discrimination.

The bill also includes a provision that would give the federal government new new authority to withhold or claw back all existing [Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program](#) funding from states that try to enforce safeguards from discriminatory and exploitative artificial intelligence systems for their citizens, forcing states into an impossible decision – protect people from exploitation, or lose billions of dollars meant to expand access to high speed internet for underserved communities, including people with disabilities.

The Senate’s proposal does include some good provisions, including an extension of the increased contribution limits and other enhancements to ABLE Accounts, which allow individuals with disabilities to save money tax-free for future disability-related expenses. However, the positive impact of these ABLE provisions would be greatly diminished by the cuts to Medicaid, which will significantly reduce the ability of people with disabilities to save money and drastically reduce disabled people’s economic security overall.

“AAPD calls on all Senators to reject this cruel and unjust legislation and instead work toward policies that strengthen, not cut, Medicaid and HCBS,” **Town concluded.** “We urge the public to contact their Senators and urge their friends, families, and neighbors to do the same. All Americans must unite to defend the rights of disabled people to live, work, and thrive in their communities.”

[Use AAPD’s tool to write and call your Senators in just a few clicks here.](#)

[If calling isn’t accessible for you, you can submit a letter only by clicking here.](#)