



BARBARA LIFTON  
Member of Assembly  
125<sup>th</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIR  
Assembly Steering Committee

COMMITTEES  
Agriculture  
Education  
Election Law  
Environmental Conservation  
Higher Education

MEMBER  
Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

January 10, 2017

Congressmember Tom Reed  
2437 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Congressmember Claudia Tenney  
512 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmembers *Tom* Reed and *Claudia* Tenney,

I am writing on behalf of my constituents in the 125<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, which you both represent in Congress, to let you know of my deep concern, along with theirs, about the potential repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), often referred to as Obamacare. I very strongly urge that you not repeal the ACA without an immediate replacement that provides health care services that are the same or better than under the ACA -- and at a cost as affordable as the ACA. The ACA has transformed the delivery of healthcare in our state and nation, and has had a positive impact on the lives of millions. Yes, there are flaws to the ACA, as there are with any large piece of legislation, and those flaws should be fixed, but the benefits of the ACA far outweigh the problems, and the risks of overturning it without a meaningful replacement are enormous.

I have heard Speaker Paul Ryan and others of your Republican colleagues say that they will just pass the repeal, but people will not lose their insurance until a replacement is put in place in two to four years. It is my understanding that they "only want to repeal the financing -- that is, apparently, the insurance mandate and the tax on medical supply companies, which are the main sources of revenue to pay for the ACA. Unless I misunderstand what is being proposed, the GOP leadership seems to be saying they like the main parts of the ACA (coverage for pre-existing conditions and for children up to age 26), but they don't want to pay for it. It seems clear to me that if they repeal the funding, the ACA collapses quite quickly. How would it survive even for a few months? -- I would be interested to know.

I want to make sure you are aware of the negative impact of such a repeal on New York State and, more specifically, on my Assembly district. If the ACA is repealed wholesale, it will result in 2.7 million New Yorkers losing their health insurance. In the two counties that make up my Assembly district, Tompkins and Cortland, the number of uninsured would be 7,827 and 4,606 respectively. A repeal would take us back to the pre-ACA days, where people often could not afford to buy health insurance, since the

insurance premiums were completely unaffordable for many working families in New York. And people with pre-existing conditions could not get insurance at all, at any price. Repeal of the ACA means that those thousands of people in my Assembly district who currently have the ACA benefits will not have primary preventive care once again, which means their only recourse will be to go to the emergency room for their health care – often when they are very sick, sometimes beyond help.

The American Institute for Medicine has long cited this “emergency-room-care-as-health-care” situation as causing the death of tens of thousands of Americans every year, people who could have been saved with good primary preventive care. A return to those days would be an unconscionable step backwards for our nation, our state and the people of my Assembly District.

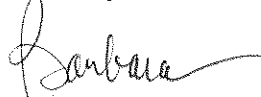
Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, the New York State of Health Exchange has succeeded in cutting the rate of uninsured New Yorkers in half, from 10 percent to 5 percent. In an age when many struggle to afford even basic insurance, this is a major accomplishment. Furthermore, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act could deal a costly blow to local governments, which have relied on the Affordable Care Act’s additional Medicaid funding to control property taxes. Without the Affordable Care Act, New York counties stand to lose nearly \$600 million in federal funding. The direct impact of lost funding to the counties in my Assembly district every year would be \$1,015,126 for Tompkins County and \$786,023 for Cortland County, very significant losses for each of my rural counties’ annual budgets.

The repeal of the ACA, without immediate, comparable replacement would also have a devastating impact on our state’s fragile hospital system. Many hospitals across the state suffer from severe fiscal challenges, especially in rural areas. I have heard from the hospitals in my Assembly district about the harm that a repeal of the ACA would do to their services. Cayuga Medical Center would stand to lose \$3.4 million a year, while Cortland Regional Medical Center would lose \$1.3 million a year, devastating cuts, needless to say. Instead of the win-win we have now with millions of New Yorkers getting good health care while creating thousands of health care jobs in our state, we would return to the dark days when sick patients filled hospital emergency rooms, as their only option for care, while losing thousands of jobs in the health care sector.

I recently received a mailing for you, Congressman Reed, saying that you support the repeal of the ACA, but I hope, as you have heard from your constituents who are seeing the great benefits of the ACA and from other representatives such as me who have given you data that perhaps you didn’t have, that you will re-consider your position on this critical matter. As the American Institute for Medicine has long made clear, people die when they don’t have insurance and, therefore, access to good primary preventive care.

While repeal of the Affordable Care Act may seem like a good idea to wealthy members of Congress, ordinary working New Yorkers can’t afford to have their health and financial security put at risk. They believe, as I do, in the principle that the Affordable Care Act enshrined into law: that all Americans should have access to affordable, quality healthcare. On behalf of my constituents, I strongly urge against the repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara".

Barbara Lifton  
Member of Assembly  
125<sup>th</sup> District

cc: Senator Charles Schumer

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

John Rudd, President and CEO, Cayuga Medical Center

Mark Webster, President and CEO, Cortland Regional Medical Center

Mike Lake, Tompkins County Legislature Chair

Donnell Boyden, Cortland County Legislature Chair