

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by President-elect Joe Biden in Wilmington, Delaware

Good afternoon, everyone.

This morning the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a case of grave importance to all Americans.

This case represents the latest attempt by far-right ideologues to do what they have repeatedly failed to do — in the courts, in Congress, and in the court of public opinion over the last decade: eliminate the entire Affordable Care Act.

Twice already, the Supreme Court has upheld this landmark law — in 2012 and 2015.

And the Congress, expressing the popular will of the American people and on a bipartisan basis, has rejected the numerous efforts of President Trump to erase the law as well.

Now, in the midst of a deadly pandemic that has infected more than 10 million Americans — nearly one out of every 32 of our people — often with devastating consequences to their health; these ideologues are once again trying to strip health coverage away.

The goal of the outgoing Administration is clear from the brief they filed with the Court.

It asserts, quote: “The entire ACA thus must fall.”

Now, I’m not naive about the fact that health care is an issue that has divided Americans in the past.

But the truth is, the American people are more united on this issue today than they are divided.

As recently as last month, a leading survey found that Americans want to keep the Affordable Care Act in place by an overwhelming margin of 22 percent.

Seventy-nine percent of Americans — including nine out of ten Democrats, eight out of ten Independents, and two-thirds of Republicans — want to keep the ACA’s protections for people with pre-existing conditions, which would be eliminated if this lawsuit were to succeed.

This doesn’t need to be a partisan issue.

This is a human issue. It affects every single American family.

And we can’t subvert the growing consensus of the American people based on arguments put forward in the briefs seeking to invalidate the law that even many conservative legal scholars, including in the National Review, consider to be ridiculous.

Let's be absolutely clear about what's at stake here.

The consequences of the Trump Administration's argument are not academic or an abstraction.

For many Americans, they are a matter of life and death.

This argument will determine whether the health coverage of more than 20 million Americans will be ripped away in the middle of the worst public health crisis in a century.

Whether 100 million people with pre-existing conditions like asthma, diabetes, and cancer could once again be denied coverage.

Whether complications from COVID-19, like lung scarring and heart damage, will become the next flood of pre-existing conditions that could be used as an excuse to jack up premiums or deny coverage altogether for millions of survivors who have struggled and won the fight of their lives against coronavirus.

This argument will determine whether women can once again be charged higher premiums just because they are women.

Whether seniors will see their prescription drug prices go up.

Whether kids will still be able to stay on their parents' plans up to age 26.

And whether annual and lifetime limits on your benefits will be re-imposed.

This isn't hyperbole — this is real. As real as it gets.

When a family is faced with that awful news of a child diagnosed with leukemia, a mom forced to battle against breast cancer, an accident that leaves a loved one unable to live the life they've always known — it stops your heart.

It wrenches your entire world off of its axis.

Believe me — I know that feeling. Too many American families do.

And in that moment, the very last thing on your mind — the very last thing that should be on your mind — is whether you can afford treatment.

The Affordable Care Act was created to put a stop to that inhumanity.

It was created to ensure that families thrust into the worst nightmare of their lives could focus not on money, but on

the fight that really matters.

Obamacare is a law that every American should be proud of.

It's why people with pre-existing conditions are protected in this country.

It's a law that delivered vital coverage to more than 20 million Americans.

It's a law that reduced prescription drug costs for nearly 12 million seniors.

It's a law that has saved lives and spared countless families from financial ruin.

So this effort to bypass the will of the people, the verdict of the courts, and the judgment of Congress is simply cruel and needlessly divisive.

But regardless of the outcome of this case, I promise you this:

Beginning on January 20th, Vice President-elect Harris and I are going to do everything in our power to ease the burden of health care on you and your families.

That starts by building on the Affordable Care Act with a dramatic expansion of health coverage and bold steps to lower health care costs.

My transition team will soon be starting its work to flesh out the details so that we can hit the ground running tackling costs, increasing access, and lowering the price of prescription drugs.

Families are reeling right now, enduring illnesses; forced into risky choices; losing their employer plans in droves.

They need a lifeline now.

They shouldn't have to hold their breath, waiting to see if the Supreme Court is going to wrench away the peace of mind they've come to rely on.

So we are going to get right to work, addressing the issues that families are talking about around their kitchen tables.

Making sure that they can go to bed at night with the peace of mind they deserve.

And fulfilling our moral obligation to ensure that, here in America, health care is a right for all, not a privilege for the few.

So, come January, we will work quickly with Congress to dramatically ramp up health care protections, get America to universal coverage, and lower health care costs as soon as humanly possible.

That is our promise to you: we will fight for your family's health coverage the same way we would fight for our own.

And we want every single American to know, if you're sick; if you're struggling; if you're worried about how you're going to get through the day —

We will not abandon you.

We will not leave you to face these challenges alone.

We are going to get through this together.

And we are going to build a health care system that puts you and your family first and that every American can be proud of.

Thank you.

God bless you and may God protect our troops.