

# Statement by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka on the Supreme Court Health Care Decision

June 28, 2012

We are pleased and relieved that the Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act. Today's decision means that we can continue moving full speed ahead to implement and build upon the Affordable Care Act. We have no illusion that the destination has been reached, and we are more committed than ever to the hard work necessary to achieve our dream of quality health care for all.

With this decision, more than 105 million Americans will continue to benefit from the elimination of lifetime limits and the coverage of preventive services without cost-sharing, and more than 6 million young adults will remain covered by their parents' health care plans. Seniors will continue to save money on prescription drugs as the Part D donut hole closes over the next eight years; already over 5 million seniors have saved \$3.7 billion on prescriptions in 2010 and 2011. And insurance companies will not be able to deny coverage due to pre-existing conditions, charge women more or drop coverage for those who get sick.

To assure that 33 million Americans will be able to obtain health care coverage through the exchanges and Medicaid beginning in 2014, all states, including those that waited for this decision to be issued, must now do their job and act without delay. We are troubled by the Court's decision limiting the ability of the federal government to encourage states to extend Medicaid coverage to certain lower income individuals, and it would be unconscionable for states to refuse to extend that coverage, using today's decision as a pretext.

The Affordable Care Act is our first step in expanding health care coverage, improving care and beginning to get control of health care costs. We will need to build on the achievements of the Act, Medicare and Medicaid in order to fix our broken health care system and advance along the path to a more equitable and cost-effective system.

We believe the way forward is to build on the Affordable Care Act reforms that strengthen Medicare's historic leadership in containing health care costs, without cutting benefits. A simple indisputably constitutional solution is to allow Americans of all ages to buy into an improved Medicare program. We believe every baby in America—whether rich or poor—deserves the same standard of quality care, and we will keep moving forward until we make this a reality.

We cannot afford to go backward, but that is what Mitt Romney and the Republican leadership in Congress would do. Their prescriptions would not expand coverage or control health care costs. Instead, they would shift costs to working families, retirees and the states.

The election this November provides a clear choice between the President, who has stood for fairness and for working men and women, and Romney, who urges repealing health insurance protection for working families. We stand with the President.

**Contact:** Josh Goldstein (202) 637-5018