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Rep. Darren Soto, Rep. Val Demings Call to Improve Health Care and Lower Costs for Floridians

Rep. Darren Soto, Rep. Val Demings, and Health Care Advocates Join Protect Our Care on the Nationwide “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour to Demonstrate the Urgent Need to Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs and Cover Floridians Who Fall Into the Medicaid Gap



[Orlando, FL] - This morning, Protect Our Care’s “Care Force One” arrived in Orlando to demonstrate the need for lowering Floridians’ health costs, expanding coverage, and reducing racial disparities in care. Headlined by Congressman Darren Soto (D-FL-9th) and Congresswoman Val Demings (D-FL-10th), the event highlighted how Democrats are leading the charge to advance American health care and held Republicans accountable for continuing to reject measures to improve care and lower costs for Floridians.

[**You Can Watch the Event Here.**](#)

Throughout the nationwide [“Lower Cost, Better Care”](#) bus tour, Protect Our Care is fighting to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation. These priorities include giving Medicare the power to negotiate for

lower drug prices for all Americans, getting more Americans covered by closing the Medicaid gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include hearing, dental, and vision, and further reducing health care premiums for millions of Americans who purchase coverage on their own.

“Our message is clear: we Democrats are united to protect our care and build back better,” said **Congressman Darren Soto (D-FL-9th)**. “We are fighting to expand Medicare, to expand Medicaid, and to lower prescription drug costs. By expanding Medicare and covering hearing, dental, and vision—a long time injustice. We are also going to be expanding Medicaid—something which is an original sin in the Florida Legislature, as they have refused since 2014 to cover nearly a million Floridians who fall into the coverage gap [...] We need to get this done—we are talking about an average family of four where two parents are working every day and having trouble making ends meet here in Central Florida, and are struggling to pay rent and make ends meet. That is an injustice, and a wrong we are going to right. We are also going to help our seniors by lowering prescription drug prices, by making sure Medicare can negotiate drug prices, just like the VA and Medicaid already do [...] I am honored to be serving on the Energy and Commerce Committee, where we will be working on these health care issues directly, along with amazing champions in Central Florida.”

“Every American regardless of who they are, their color of their skin, where they live, or how much money they have, should have access to quality health care that is affordable,” said **Congresswoman Val Demings (D-FL-10th)**. “We have ways that we can do that. We can allow Medicare to negotiate the cost of prescription drugs. We can finally expand Medicaid. If we know that it provides not only coverage, but financial stability, why would we not do that? And Florida, shamefully, is one of twelve states that has refused to expand Medicaid to provide coverage without it, in the greatest country in the world.”

“I’ve lived in Orlando since 1979, and I am one of the many in this state without health insurance. I fall into the Medicaid gap, and I have several health issues: I have chronic pulmonary obstructive disorder, an enlarged heart chamber, multiple dental issues, and cataracts,” shared **Jennifer Dotson, a local Orlando resident**. “Without health insurance, I can’t get any of those things fixed; I can’t get health care. I have been forced to resort to GoFundMes to fund my cataract surgery. I hope we can work together to expand healthcare and Medicaid. Thank you Congresswoman Demings and Congressman Soto; without you, I don’t know where we would be.”

“When I was fighting stage 4 cancer, I had to forego medication that would boost my immune system because the price tag was simply too high,” said **Laura Packard, national healthcare advocate**. “I wound up in the hospital, and nearly died. Sadly, stories like these are all too common in our country. Patients should be able to focus on getting well, not struggling to pay for medications. That’s why we need Congress to act now to lower the cost of prescription drugs, including allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of all Americans.”

Later today, “Care Force One” will head to Tampa, where Protect Our Care will be joined by Congressman Charlie Crist (D-FL-13th), Congresswoman Kathy Castor (D-FL-14th), among other healthcare advocates. For more information, please visit protectourcare.org/bus-tour/.

The Protect Our Care “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour is making stops in:

Bangor, Maine on Monday, August 9, 2021
Portland, Maine on Monday, August 9, 2021
Burlington, Vermont on Tuesday, August 10, 2021
Concord, New Hampshire on Wednesday, August 11, 2021
Teaneck, New Jersey on Thursday, August 12, 2021
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on Thursday, August 12, 2021
New York, New York on Friday, August 13, 2021
New Brunswick, New Jersey on Monday, August 16, 2021
Scranton, Pennsylvania on Monday, August 16, 2021
Burlington County, New Jersey on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Wilmington, Delaware on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Dover, Delaware on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Morgantown, West Virginia on Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Youngstown, Ohio on Thursday, August 19, 2021
Columbus, Ohio on Thursday, August 19, 2021
Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Friday, August 20, 2021
Madison, Wisconsin on Friday, August 20, 2021
Parkersburg, West Virginia on Monday, August 23, 2021
Charleston, West Virginia on Monday, August 23, 2021
Raleigh, North Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Charlotte, North Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Columbia, South Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Atlanta, Georgia on Wednesday, August 25, 2021
Savannah, Georgia on Wednesday, August 25, 2021
Orlando, Florida on Thursday, August 26, 2021
Tampa, Florida on Thursday, August 26, 2021
Denver, Colorado on Monday, August 30, 2021
Flagstaff, Arizona on Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Phoenix, Arizona on Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Tucson, Arizona on Wednesday, September 1, 2021
San Diego, California on Thursday, September 2, 2021
Anaheim, California on Thursday, September 2, 2021
Las Vegas, Nevada on Friday, September 3, 2021

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