



AMERICAN BENEFITS  
COUNCIL

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*Council commends HELP committee health proposal*

## Proposed measure to lower health costs makes progress on many employer goals

WASHINGTON, DC – “The biggest and most urgent problem in health care is that fewer and fewer people are able to afford it,” American Benefits Council Senior Vice President, Health Policy, Ilyse Schuman, said today. “Lowering health care costs requires a comprehensive, bipartisan solution, and we commend Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) for producing the Lower Health Care Costs Act discussion draft.”

Employers, who provide health coverage for more than 181 million Americans, are keenly interested in lowering health care costs so they can continue to deliver value for employees and their families. The Council will be providing specific feedback on the measure by the June 5 deadline set by Senators Alexander and Murray.

“We are particularly gratified that this draft legislation is closely aligned with a number of recommendations in the Council’s [March 1 letter to Senate HELP Committee leaders](#) and makes significant progress toward many of the goals articulated by employer plan sponsors,” Schuman said. “It includes critically important provisions addressing ‘surprise’ medical billing and price transparency, which are key priorities for the Council.”

As Schuman [testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions on April 2](#), employers are deeply concerned about the burden that surprise medical bills place on their employees and seek a legislative solution that protects patients without undermining access to high-quality, high-value networks or increasing health care costs for individuals and employers. Baseball-style arbitration, one of the three legislative options included in the discussion draft, would be a costly and ineffective approach to solving this problem and should be rejected.

As the Council has noted in its frequent communications and testimony to Congress, the nation's health care system is beset by market distortions that reduce the otherwise remarkable value of the employer-sponsored system. To address these distortions, the Council recently joined with Families USA, health care providers, organized labor and others to form [Consumers First: The Alliance to Make the Health Care System Work for Everyone](#).

"Employer-provided health coverage has historically provided enormous value to beneficiaries and the federal government. But the incentives for low-cost, high-quality care have become so misaligned that this model for providing essential protection is threatened," Schuman said. "The Lower Health Care Costs Act promises to bend the system back into shape and we look forward to working with the committee to make sure it achieves our shared goals."

For more information on health policy, or to arrange an interview with Schuman, contact Jason Hammersla, Council vice president, communications, at [jhammersla@abcstaff.org](mailto:jhammersla@abcstaff.org) or by phone at 202-289-6700 (office) or (202) 422-4652 (cell).

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*The Council is a public policy organization whose members include over 220 of the world's largest corporations, as ranked by Fortune and Forbes. Collectively, the Council's members either directly sponsor or administer health and retirement benefits for virtually all Americans covered by employer-sponsored plans.*