

Office of the Governor
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December 17, 2018

Representative Taylor F. Barras
Louisiana House of Representatives
Post Office Box 94062
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Dear Speaker Barras:

As I am sure you are aware, last week a federal district court judge in Texas ruled on the case brought by the Attorney General of Texas and joined by Attorney General Landry regarding the Affordable Care Act. As you also know, I have long expressed my opposition to this lawsuit because it sought to allow insurance companies to deny coverage to people with pre-existing conditions. The judge's ruling does in fact allow for insurance companies to deny this coverage, but it also went much further eliminated the Affordable Care Act's other critical provisions including Medicaid expansion. This shortsighted lawsuit has put at risk the more than 849,000 Louisianans with pre-existing conditions, as well as the 480,000 Louisianans who now have health insurance through Medicaid expansion. It also eliminates the coverage for countless children under 26 years old who are on their parents' health insurance. Further, because it endangers Medicaid expansion, it would also create an enormous shortfall in our state budget.


In a letter to you on September 11, 2018, I asked you to reserve one of your five non-fiscal bills in the upcoming legislative session to carry legislation to protect people with pre-existing conditions. As of today, I still have not received a commitment (or a response) from you. Therefore, I have asked Representative Chad Brown to carry this legislation in the 2019 Regular Session. In light of the court's ruling on Friday, this legislation will provide for the following:

- 1) Prohibit pre-existing condition exclusions
- 2) Prohibit eligibility decisions based on an individual's health status
- 3) Prohibit annual and lifetime benefit limits, and excessive waiting periods
- 4) Provide for availability, renewability, and essential benefits of health care coverage
- 5) Provide for dependent health care coverage for children until the age of 26

Representative Taylor F. Barras
December 17, 2018
Page Two

I am encouraged by Representative Brown and the many other members of the legislature who have offered to co-sponsor this important legislation, the passage of which will provide peace of mind to approximately one million Louisianans who may be affected if the trial court's decision in this matter is affirmed. Given your previous support for "protecting people with pre-existing conditions," I am hopeful that you will show your support for this legislation.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Senator John A. Alario, Jr.
Representative Chad Brown
Representative Frank A. Hoffman
Senator Fred Mills
Attorney General Jeff Landry