



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Statement As Prepared For Delivery  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Press Conference Regarding the Republican Proposal to Cut  
Medicaid Funding for the Territories  
*May 9, 2012*

Good morning. A little over two years ago, on a warm spring day not unlike this one, the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus gathered outside the Capitol to express our strong support for the *Affordable Care Act*. This was a mere three days before that historic bill was approved by the House and a mere five days before President Obama signed it into law.

During the remarks I delivered at that event, I stated that, not only was it a beautiful day in Washington, D.C., but it was also a beautiful day for the people of Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories, because—after so much hard work, especially by the members of this Caucus—the final bill that was about to be voted on provided equitable treatment to the 4.1 million Americans living in the territories. Most notably, the *Affordable Care Act* mitigated, although it did not end, the blatantly discriminatory treatment that Puerto Rico and the four other territories have historically faced under the Medicaid program, which provides health care to low-income families and individuals.

Today, we gather under different circumstances. This week, the Republican-controlled House will vote to approve a budget reconciliation bill that would repeal every single penny of the \$6.3

billion dollars in new Medicaid funding that Puerto Rico and the other territories received under the *Affordable Care Act*. If this bill ever becomes law, it would result in a 65 percent reduction in federal Medicaid funding for the territories, which would be devastating to our most vulnerable constituents.

But we are here this morning not simply to denounce the Republican proposal, but to make absolutely clear that the CHC—along with our allies in the White House and the Senate—have no intention of allowing this misguided, irresponsible and unprincipled bill to become law. Just as we fought together to obtain this long-overdue and desperately-needed funding, we will fight together to protect it from those who, in their zeal to cut spending, have abandoned any and all sense of perspective and justice.

In closing, I want to note that, in the battle first to obtain and now to retain our Medicaid funding, I could not ask for better—or more determined—allies. CHC Chair Charlie Gonzalez, like his predecessor Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, has always been a great champion for fair treatment for the U.S. territories under health and other federal programs. Senator Robert Menendez, Congressman Xavier Becerra, Congressman José Serrano—when you are in the trenches, these are the kind of people you want by your side and watching your back.

Thank you all.