ACEP believes the Affordable Care Act (ACA) law has its flaws and would like to see those rectified by Congress. However, the draft Senate legislation currently under consideration, entitled the “Better Care Reconciliation Act” (BCRA), is not the answer. ACEP is asking you to contact your U.S. Senators to urge them to oppose the BCRA and work on bipartisan solutions to improve health care and coverage for all Americans.

The U.S. Senate is expected to consider its ACA “repeal and replace” legislative proposal this week following approval of the “American Health Care Act” (ACHA) in the House of Representatives on May 4. The BCRA was released on Thursday and was intended to be a discussion draft to help the Republican leadership gauge the position of its conference members. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) is trying to schedule the vote on the final bill before the end of the week when Congress adjourns for the July 4th recess.

Over the past several days, two groups of Republican Senators have either expressed their outright opposition to the plan or indicated major changes would be needed to secure their support. The first faction consists of those senators who believe the bill does not go far enough in its effort to repeal the ACA and it includes Sens. Ted Cruz (TX), Mike Lee (UT), Rand Paul (KY) and Ron Johnson (WI). The second group would like to see additional modifications to BCRA on a variety of issues, such as Medicaid expansion and coverage, funding for Planned Parenthood, increased funding and expanded opioid misuse programs, and/or ensuring other patient protections, among other things. These senators include Dean Heller (NV), Susan Collins (ME), Lisa Murkowski (AK), Rob Portman (OH), Shelley Moore Capito (WV) and Bill Cassidy (LA).

We expect Majority Leader McConnell (KY) to continue making modifications to the bill as he looks for the support he needs to reach his 50-vote threshold, which would allow Vice President Mike Pence to cast the tie-breaking vote. These discussions could be further complicated when the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) releases its estimates of how much the proposal will cost or save, as well as its impact on the number of Americans with insurance, which is expected later today.
The BCRA would make sweeping changes to the health care system that directly contradict ACEP’s health care reform principles and would lead to a significant reduction in health care coverage for Americans, erode patient protections, such as coverage for emergency services, as well as endanger patient safety and public health.

Please contact your U.S. Senators today and urge them vote no on BCRA.