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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

A. JAY KHOSLA, STAFF DIRECTOR
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September 22, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman, Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch:

We respectfully request that the Finance Committee's September 25 hearing on the Graham-Cassidy-Heller bill be held in one of the Senate's larger hearing rooms rather than in our regular hearing room, Dirksen 215. This would be in keeping with the extraordinary importance of the hearing and with the Committee's usual practice with respect to matters of such intense public interest.

The Graham-Cassidy-Heller bill would radically reshape the American health care system, and the Senate Finance Committee's hearing will be the first and only opportunity for this bill to be debated in public before it is due to be considered on the Senate floor. There is enormous interest in the hearing, from the general public, groups representing affected interests, and the press. We should do everything we can to accommodate as many members of the public and the press as possible.

When considering the Affordable Care Act, the Senate Finance Committee engaged in a bipartisan, collaborative process which included more than 50 hearings and roundtables and full eight days marking up the legislation. We engaged in this process because we believed our work should be accountable to the American people. We also wanted the Affordable Care Act to reflect a serious, carefully considered effort involving stakeholder input and expert opinions, independent of ideology, because we knew others had important contributions that would make the bill stronger. While one hearing is better than none, this process reflects none of the rigor that resulted in the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

During consideration of the Affordable Care Act, the Senate Finance Committee held multiple hearings in large meeting rooms, including Hart 216 and Dirksen 108. The Committee held its eight day markup, the longest in Committee history, in Hart 216. Additionally, the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee recently held four hearings in Hart 216 that attracted significant attention from the media and press to discuss a much narrower legislative objective.

Given that Monday's hearing will be the only venue for public debate on the Graham-Cassidy-Heller proposal, we feel it is appropriate that hearing be moved to a larger Senate meeting room. We hope that you can accommodate this modest request.

Sincerely,

Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance

Debbie Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senator

Maria Cantwell

Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator

Bill Nelson

Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator

Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez
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Mark R. Warner
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