



December 14, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

With the passage of the Build Back Better Act in the House of Representatives last month, I am reaching out on behalf of the American Lung Association and the more than 36 million Americans we represent to ask that the Senate swiftly pass this legislation.

The American Lung Association sees the Build Back Better Act as a critical investment in lung health, both now and into the future. There is certainly more to be done, but many of the provisions that are included in the Build Better Back represent significant progress towards protecting lung health from the harms of air pollution, climate change and tobacco and expanding access to quality and affordable healthcare.

The Build Back Better Act represents the greatest opportunity Congress has to make reductions in air pollution and advance solutions to climate change. Communities across the country are already experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change, and poor air quality is making it harder for people to breathe. Passing the Build Back Better Act will make significant reductions in the emissions driving both air pollution and climate change. Ten-year, refundable tax credits for clean energy sources like wind and solar will help the country transition to cleaner forms of electricity. Investments in electric vehicles, buses and the necessary infrastructure through tax credits and other programs will help set the country on a path toward a pollution-free transportation sector. Further, the Methane Emissions Reduction Program will be a value-add compliment to regulatory actions taken by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, maximizing the reductions of one of the most potent climate pollutants.

Extending advance premium tax credits until 2025 will enable millions of Americans, including those who have previously been without coverage of any kind, to access quality and affordable healthcare. Further, the inclusion of continuous eligibility for children in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) as well as the permanent funding of CHIP will greatly improve access to healthcare for the nation's children. Finally, the incorporation of the Helping Adults Protect Immunity (HAPI) Act will enhance equity and further protect against infectious disease by ensuring that all Medicaid beneficiaries have access to vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Lung Association is very disappointed by reports that the e-cigarette tax included in the House package was dropped out of the bill. More than two million middle and high school students use e-cigarettes. Youth e-cigarette use has been declared an epidemic by the U.S. Surgeon General, and taxing tobacco products is a proven way to protect youth from these products. The Lung Association urges the Senate to adopt the language included in the House-passed bill that would implement the first ever federal tax on e-cigarettes. We recommend increasing the federal tobacco tax for all tobacco products to save lives.

As the nation continues to battle an evolving pandemic, the time is now to make bold investments in the future of our nation's health. The American Lung Association's mission is to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. The Build Back Better Act is an opportunity to do just that and one that Congress cannot afford to delay or miss. We urge the Senate to swiftly vote on the bill and maintain bold investments in a healthier future.

Sincerely,

Harold Wimmer

Harold P. Wimmer
National President and CEO

