



ELAINE J W STANOVSKY  
RESIDENT BISHOP  
RACHEL FITZGERALD  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
TO THE BISHOP

August 7, 2017

Senator Lisa Murkowski  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

800 Glacier Avenue, Suite 101  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Murkowski,

Thank you for your vote against repeal of the Affordable Care Act. As bishop of the United Methodist Churches in Alaska and throughout the Greater Northwest region of the United States, I care for more than 1,800 United Methodists in Alaska, from Nome to Onalaska and Ketchikan, who are engaged in ministries of service and care with people living in poverty. Their service to the people in their communities stretches far beyond their numbers. Thank you for insisting that the government be *for* the people.

You showed tremendous courage in resisting the pressures from your colleagues and from the President of the United States. You also showed tremendous compassion for your constituents in Alaska who depend on Medicaid and other provisions of the Affordable Care Act for their health care.

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church<sup>1</sup> state:

*Creating the personal, environmental, and social conditions in which health can thrive is a joint responsibility – public and private. . . . Health care is a basic human right.*

*Providing the care needed to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore health after injury or illness is a responsibility each person owes others and government owes to all, a responsibility government ignores at its peril. . . . The right to health care includes care for persons with brain diseases, neurological conditions, or physical disabilities, who must be afforded the same access to health care as all other persons in our communities. It is unjust to construct or perpetuate barriers to physical or mental wholeness or full participation in community.*

*We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care.*

I pray for you and the members of Congress as you work to find a solution to the very complex problem of providing health care for your constituents in Alaska, and for all the citizens in our United States.

Again, on behalf of United Methodists in the Alaska Missionary Conference, thank you for your caring and for your courage.

May God bless you and keep you,

Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky

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<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016, "The Social Principles," Right to Health Care* ¶ 162, pp 129-130.