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## Religious Leaders Back Medicaid

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Distinctly Catholic

A diverse group of religious leaders have issued a public letter calling on governors to set their partisan instincts aside, and embrace the expansion of Medicaid offered under the terms of the Affordable Care Act. Medicaid is the joint state-federal program that provides health care to the poor.

The Supreme Court struck down the provision that would have allowed the federal government to essentially coerce the states to expand Medicaid. Coercion or not, the states should engage in this expansion of Medicaid which will create access to health care for millions of working poor people who may technically live just above the poverty line, but whose health care choices are currently severely limited if they exist at all.

I will be writing about Medicaid next Monday, but will say this at the outset. The Republicans like to say that the ACA will put the government into the examining room. This is hogwash. The ACA does open the door to the examining room for millions of Americans for whom that door is currently barred. The expansion of Medicaid is one of the principal means by which that door is opened. Shame on any governor who decides to stand in the way. In the 1960s, then-Gov George Wallace stood in front of the door at the University of Alabama. He thought he was barring black folk but he was really trying, unsuccessfully it turned out, to bar the advance of justice. Today's governors should not stand in the way of justice, this time, in front of the examining room.

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