

1 HJR308  
2 192366-2  
3 By Representatives Moore (M), Jackson, Grimsley, Rogers,  
4 Knight, Lawrence, Chestnut, Morrow, McCampbell, McClammy,  
5 Holmes (A), Hollis, Drummond, Clarke, England, Boyd, Coleman,  
6 Black, Warren, Beech, Forte, Bracy, Buskey, Hall and Todd  
7 RFD: Rules  
8 First Read: 06-MAR-18

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8 EXPRESSING THE INTENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS OF  
9 THE LEGISLATURE AND URGING THE GOVERNOR TO EXPAND MEDICAID IN  
10 THE STATE OF ALABAMA UNDER THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT.  
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12 WHEREAS, on April 6, 2015, Governor Robert Bentley  
13 created the Alabama Health Care Improvement Task Force and  
14 charged it to bring recommendations to improve the health of  
15 Alabamians and make health care more accessible and more  
16 affordable; and

17 WHEREAS, after thorough study and deliberation, the  
18 Alabama Health Care Improvement Task Force found that the most  
19 serious obstacle to improving the health of Alabamians and  
20 making health care more accessible and affordable is the  
21 coverage gap that makes health insurance inaccessible to  
22 hundreds of thousands of Alabamians and places our entire  
23 health care infrastructure in financial jeopardy; and

24 WHEREAS, according to the Alabama Health Care  
25 Improvement Task Force, expanding Medicaid would mean the  
26 following for the State of Alabama:

1           (1) Around 185,000 working Alabamians would get  
2 low-cost health insurance, more than half of Alabama's  
3 uninsured adults who fall within the proposed redesigned  
4 Medicaid income limits are working. Covering low-income adults  
5 would also reduce the burden of medical debt, now the leading  
6 cause of personal bankruptcy.

7           (2) A win for the state budget, the state's budget  
8 would realize savings in other areas and increase revenues to  
9 the state which are estimated to be \$1.7 billion per year in  
10 new revenue for state health care providers, \$1.2 billion in  
11 new income per year to the rest of the state's economy, and  
12 associated tax revenues which could offset most or all of the  
13 state share.

14           (3) Better access to care would improve chronic  
15 disease management and save lives, access to a primary care  
16 "health home" with preventative checkups and screenings, early  
17 detection and treatment of health problems, less dependence on  
18 costly emergency care, and regular OB/GYN visits without  
19 referral. Early diagnosis and treatment will improve health  
20 outcomes, increase workforce productivity and reduce state  
21 costs for chronic disease management and other expensive  
22 medical care.

23           (4) Reducing the number of uninsured patients will  
24 keep hospitals open. Since 2011, five rural Alabama hospitals  
25 have closed. Forty-five percent of those remaining are  
26 operating in the red. These hospitals depend on federal  
27 dollars to offset the cost of serving a high proportion of

1 low-income and uninsured patients; however, they have suffered  
2 due to the state's failure to expand Medicaid.

3 (5) Reducing the number of uninsured patients will  
4 keep doctors practicing in areas of greatest need for doctors  
5 serving the uninsured and underinsured population, their  
6 bottom lines would improve and allow them to keep their  
7 employees paid and their offices open.

8 (6) Thousands of underinsured Alabama veterans would  
9 gain health coverage if Alabama closed the health coverage  
10 gap. Many veterans do not qualify for long-term health  
11 benefits. An estimated 18,000 uninsured Alabama veterans and  
12 their spouses are being denied the Medicaid coverage they  
13 could receive in other states.

14 (7) Accepting federal dollars to cover low-income  
15 adults could strengthen Medicaid reform, bringing newly  
16 eligible low-income adults into the new system at the higher  
17 matching rate would support health care services and  
18 infrastructure enhancements that benefit not only other  
19 Medicaid enrollees like children, pregnant women, aged, blind  
20 and disabled individuals, but all Alabamians.

21 (8) Closing the coverage gap is a wise investment in  
22 Alabama's future. Thousands of hardworking people who cannot  
23 afford insurance will gain the peace of mind that coverage  
24 brings. Alabama businesses stand to gain a more reliable  
25 workforce and Alabama's economy stands to gain an infusion of  
26 federal dollars, more tax revenues and thousands of new health  
27 care jobs; and

1           WHEREAS, according to the Alabama Health Care  
2   Improvement Task Force, Medicaid expansion for less than a  
3   dime on the dollar is a bargain that Alabama cannot afford to  
4   pass up; and

5           WHEREAS, the Alabama Health Care Improvement Task  
6   Force recommended that the Governor and the Legislature move  
7   forward at the earliest opportunity to close Alabama's health  
8   coverage gap by expanding Medicaid; now therefore,

9           BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH  
10   HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the members of the democratic  
11   party urge the Governor of the State of Alabama to expand  
12   Medicaid in this state under the Patient Protection and  
13   Affordable Care Act to enhance access to health care, promote  
14   revenue and economic activity, and save and create jobs in  
15   this state.

16           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this  
17   resolution be sent to Governor Kay Ivey that she may know of  
18   the strong sentiments of the democratic members of the  
19   Legislature concerning this issue.