



June 30, 2020

Geoff Duncan
Lieutenant Governor
Georgia State Senate
240 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Representative David Ralston
Speaker of the House
Georgia State House of Representatives
338 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

RE: Small business support for Medicaid expansion in Georgia

Dear Lieutenant Governor Duncan and Speaker Ralston:

As a representative of the 1.1 million small businesses in Georgia, Small Business Majority writes today to urge you to support House Bill 37, the Expand Medicaid Now Act, by Rep. Trammel et al because this legislation would help lower costs for Georgia's struggling small businesses and provide an important boost to the economy and rural communities.

Small Business Majority is a national small business advocacy organization with an office in Georgia, founded and run by small business owners. We actively engage small business owners and policymakers in support of public policy solutions, and deliver information and resources to entrepreneurs that promote small business growth and drive a strong, sustainable job-creating economy. Over the past three months, we have worked tirelessly to support small businesses in Georgia and around the country that have been harmed by the spread of COVID-19 and shutdown orders.

We are writing in support of this legislation today because expanding Medicaid would greatly help small business owners, solo entrepreneurs and small business employees across the state who are struggling to access health coverage. Our scientific opinion polling regularly finds that small businesses rank the cost of healthcare as a top challenge they face and that it is particularly challenging for [small businesses in rural communities](#), yet this year we have seen how incredibly important it is to have health coverage.

Expanding Georgia's Medicaid program would help these struggling businesses, while also creating 56,000 jobs each year and boosting the state's economy by \$6.5 billion annually. What's more, expansion could create 12,000 jobs and \$1.3 billion in new economic activity in Georgia's rural communities each year. It's important to note that Georgians are already paying federal taxes toward closing the coverage gap, but these funds are going elsewhere as Georgia has not yet expanded the state's Medicaid program and accepted federal dollars.

Additionally, Medicaid expansion would level the playing field for small businesses, particularly those in rural areas that already struggled to compete before the COVID-19 pandemic. Medicaid expansion would cover more than 470,000 Georgians, the majority of whom are working adults who don't receive health benefits through work or can't afford to participate in their employer's plan. Because so many working adults would qualify for Medicaid, small businesses that cannot afford to offer their employees health insurance would be better able to compete for workers with big businesses that can offer health insurance. This is especially critical in our rural communities where small businesses struggle greatly to compete with larger businesses for skilled workers.

An expanded Medicaid program will help lower costs for small businesses, which is critical for businesses that are struggling to recover from the effects of shutdown orders and put employees back to work. With lower insurance costs and healthier workers, small employers can worry less about healthcare and concentrate on sustaining their businesses. We urge you to support this proposal and ensure the state moves forward with a robust Medicaid program that benefits small businesses and their employees.

Sincerely,

Rachel Shanklin
Georgia Outreach Manager