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## **Federal Judge Strikes Down Work Requirements in Kentucky and Arkansas**

BOISE, ID – Today, federal rulings in *Stewart v. Azar* and *Gresham v. Azar* declared the Medicaid work-reporting requirements in Kentucky and Arkansas unlawful. The move comes as the Idaho Legislature considers adding work-reporting requirements to the voter-approved Medicaid expansion law that would increase bureaucratic red tape and prevent Idahoans from getting the coverage they need.

“Today’s ruling against the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) affirms that a fundamental purpose of Medicaid is to help states provide health insurance to their residents and that efforts to impose barriers to that coverage are unlawful and harmful to those the program is intended to help,” said Luke Malek, former legislator and attorney with Smith + Malek. “Given the litigation we’ve seen play out in Kentucky, Arkansas, and, now, New Hampshire, it is safe to assume Idaho will be mired in the same costly lawsuits if we continue to pursue legislation such as H277. Rather than waste taxpayer money, Idaho should implement unmodified Medicaid expansion as passed by the voters and realize the full social and economic benefits of the program.”

Despite hours of oppositional testimony from more than 120 healthcare advocates and members of the public during recent legislative hearings, the Idaho legislature continues to consider harmful barriers that will waste taxpayer dollars and prevent people from getting the care they need to get and stay healthy.

Work-reporting requirements have not garnered public support. After Proposition 2 passed with more than 61% of the vote, a late-February poll found that [74% of Idahoans feel the legislature should implement the law as it was passed by the voters](#), while only 17% say the law should be changed.

“Today’s court ruling is more proof that punitive measures do not belong in Medicaid,” said Lauren Necochea, Director of Idaho Voices for Children. “It is crucial

that our families are healthy and able to work. We should turn our attention to policies that can remove barriers to work rather than take health coverage away.”

**About Close the Gap Idaho:** Close the Gap Idaho is a network of over 300 organizations and individuals statewide, working to support a complete solution to the coverage gap and to preserve health coverage for Idahoans. Close the Gap Idaho has led the effort to expand Medicaid in Idaho since 2014. A list of Close the Gap Idaho steering committee members can be found on the [Close the Gap Idaho website](#). Quotes from additional member organizations and Idahoans in the gap are shared below.

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