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## **Close the Gap Idaho Calls on Governor Little to Veto Senate Bill 1204aa**

BOISE, ID – Close the Gap Idaho is calling on Governor Brad Little to veto Senate Bill 1204aa, which seeks to erect expensive barriers to enrolling in Medicaid. If enacted, this bill will cost millions in administrative costs, while stripping coverage from eligible Idahoans. The bill is also certain to ensnare Idaho in costly lawsuits over the work reporting requirement, which has been deemed illegal in other states.

Yesterday, the Idaho House of Representatives added multiple, expensive provisions to SB1204aa, including a punitive work requirement that would that remove eligible Idahoans from health insurance who are out of work or who cannot prove that they are working or exempt from the requirement. Last week, a federal judge ruled Medicaid work reporting requirements in Kentucky and Arkansas unlawful. In his decision, the judge wrote that work reporting requirements violate the central tenet of the Medicaid program, which is to furnish healthcare in the form of medical coverage. The Medicaid program does not carry with it the statutory authority to condition coverage on work. See Close the Gap Idaho's [factsheet about the recent legal decision here](#).

“Governor Little’s veto will ensure that Idaho avoids the mistakes of other states,” said Caroline Merritt with Close the Gap Idaho. Merritt continued, “We can avoid creating layers of bureaucracy and growing government, adding millions in additional costs, entangling Idaho in expensive lawsuits, and creating barriers to coverage that will make it harder for Idahoans to access care. Most significantly, we can avoid creating a secondary coverage gap. The Governor and the Legislature has the opportunity to implement clean Medicaid expansion, realize the full economic benefits of the program, and do the right thing for the people of Idaho.”

As announced on Friday, Governor Little vetoed SB 1159 because he questioned “...the constitutional sufficiency of the bills and the unintended consequences of their passage.” He went on to say that “The bills invite legal challenges that likely will result in the Idaho initiative process being determined by the liberal Ninth

Circuit Court of Appeals...” Idaho will face similar legal risks again unless Governor Little vetoes SB 1204aa.

The Legislature’s actions come after significant public outcry. In over 10 hours of nearly unanimous testimony, Idahoans have expressed their opposition to costly work reporting requirements.

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.

**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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