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# OPINION

## Turning Back the Clock to a Time of No Rights

### Health care repeal is a direct attack

BY JANICE "JAY" JOHNSON

The health care repeal that Republicans are pushing through Congress is a direct attack on the lives of black people throughout the country.

Just as these right-wing politicians are pushing us out of the voting booth, they want to push us out of doctor's offices and hospitals, further into medical debt, and closer to the grave.

Some think repealing "Obamacare" will reset the clock to 2008. In truth, the repeal plan being considered by the Senate takes us back beyond 1964, before Voting Rights, Civil Rights, and before Medicaid.

Medicaid is the program that more than any other opened the door to health care for African American people in the United States, and the lives of black people are exactly what's at stake in the fight over repeal.

The legislation proposed by Re-

publican leaders doesn't just gut the Affordable Care Act (ACA). It also aims to destroy Medicaid, cutting a quarter of its budget and capping funds, ending the guarantee that the program will be funded according to how much care is needed and used.

This will result in more than 22 million

We know these cuts won't be felt equally. Black adults are twice as likely to get their coverage through Medicaid than white adults. Although struggling people of all races will suffer under this health care repeal, the effects will hit black communities hardest.

African Americans have higher rates of diabetes, stroke and high blood pressure, and African American men are twice as likely

health care is unfathomable. Many black adults got health insurance for the first time in their life under "Obamacare" when many states expanded Medicaid. Unfortunately, too many people were shut out of these gains because some states refused the Medicaid expansion.

When Louisiana finally opened Medicaid to more people, there were newspaper reports of patients crying with relief. These

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has tried to sell health care repeal by calling it "freedom." How ridiculous!

That's the emptiest, cruelest version of freedom I can think of - the freedom to go without health care you need and can't pay for, the freedom to go bankrupt over medical debt, the freedom to die.

Without insurance, families face devastating financial consequences. More than half of all bankruptcies are due to insurmountable medical bills. Lack of health insurance isn't freedom, it is a poverty sentence that can last for generations.

When it comes to health care, the Affordable Care Act didn't get us all the way, just as Medicaid hasn't either. But the ACA put us in the right direction, and it's that progress the right-wing politicians want to destroy - and that makes them so afraid.

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people across the country losing their coverage entirely, while many more will lose critical services they need - everything from help with long-term care to cancer treatment.

to die from prostate cancer. All of these conditions are easily treatable with well managed health care, which is what the ACA is all about.

The cruelty of taking away

right-wing politicians want to steal that right out of their hands. They don't care who lives or dies as long as they can hand over a giant tax break to their billionaire and corporate donors.

## Trump's Worst Collusion is with Corporations

### Billionaires doing a lot better than Putin

BY PETER CERTO

I've always been a little skeptical that there'd be a smoking gun about the Trump campaign's alleged collusion with Russia.

The latest news about Donald Trump, Jr., however, is tantalizingly close.

The short version of the story, revealed by emails the New York Times obtained, is that the president's eldest son was offered "some official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary" and "would be very useful to your father."

More to the point, the younger Trump was explicitly told this was "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump." Donald, Jr.'s reply? "I love it."

Trump Jr. didn't just host that meeting at Trump Tower. He also brought along campaign manager Paul Manafort and top Trump confidante (and son-in-law) Jared Kushner.

We still don't have evidence they coordinated with Russian efforts to release Clinton campaign emails, spread "fake news," or hack state voting systems.

But at the very least, the top members of Trump's inner circle turned up to get intelligence they knew was part of a foreign effort to meddle in the election.

Some in Washington are convinced they've heard

of the alleged Russian meddling, "unlike the massive effects of interference by corporate power and private wealth."

That's worth dwelling on.

Many leading liberals suspect, now with a little more evidence, that Trump worked with Russia to win his election. But we've long known that huge corporations and wealthy individuals threw their weight behind the billionaire.

That gambit's paying off far

ance companies and cutting taxes on the wealthiest by over \$346 billion.

As few as 12 percent of Americans support that bill, but the allegiance of its supporters isn't to voters — it's plainly to the wealthy donors who'd get those tax cuts.

Meanwhile, majorities of Americans in every single congressional district support efforts to curb local pollution, limit car-

to let coal companies dump toxic ash in local waterways.

Meanwhile, as the administration escalates the unpopular Afghan war once again, Kushner invited billionaire military contractors — including Blackwater founder Erik Prince — to advise on policy there.

Elsewhere, JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon and other architects of the housing crash are advising Trump on financial deregulation, while student debt profiteers set policy at the Department of Education.

Chomsky complains that this sort of collusion is often "not considered a crime but the normal workings of democracy." While Trump has taken it to new heights, it's certainly a bipartisan problem.

If Trump's people did work with Russia to undermine our vote, they should absolutely be held accountable. But the politicians leading the charge don't have a snowball's chance of redeeming our democracy unless they're willing to take on the corporate conspirators much closer to home.

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enough already, with Virginia senator (and failed VP candidate) Tim Kaine calling the meeting "treason."

Perhaps. But it's worth asking: Who's done the real harm here? Some argue it's not the Russians after all.

"The effects of the crime are undetectable," the legendary social critic Noam Chomsky says

more handsomely for them — and more destructively for the rest of us — than any scheme by Putin.

The evidence is hiding in plain sight.

The top priority in Congress right now is to move a health bill that would gut Medicaid and throw at least 22 million Americans off their insurance — while loosening regulations on insur-

bon emissions, and transition to wind and solar. And majorities in every single state back the Paris climate agreement.

Yet even as scientists warn large parts of the planet could soon become uninhabitable, the fossil fuel-backed Trump administration has put a climate denier in charge of the EPA, pulled the U.S. out of Paris, and signed legislation