



# Healthcare Heist Week of Action Toolkit

- What We’re Fighting For..... 1
- Why Now?..... 2
- Key Event Ideas..... 3
- Digital Tactics..... 4
- Host Your Event on Mobilize..... 5
- Find an event near you..... 5
- Messaging..... 6
- Media..... 6
- Reporting Back..... 6
- Resources..... 6
- Co-Sponsors..... 7

## What We’re Fighting For

**The stakes: 22 million people will see their healthcare premiums double this fall, and 4.8 million will lose healthcare because they can no longer afford it, all to fund billionaire tax cuts.**

Republicans in Congress have made healthcare cuts that will devastate working families, small businesses, and young adults — hitting hardest when open enrollment starts **November 1** and most people on the Affordable Care Act hear about premium spikes for the first time. The National Week of Action is a moment to tell the story of these harmful cuts, including more than \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, and the ACA, and point to who is responsible for this pain. Without the tax credits, millions will be forced to pay nearly double for coverage or lose coverage entirely.

We have a critical window to act together. While the possibility of a legislative extension of the premium tax credits exists, this is also a campaign to win the public narrative on the tax bill — on what's in it, who benefits, and who is harmed. Public opinion is in favor of protecting healthcare, but most people don't know the details. People are just starting to hear about the healthcare cuts that kick in this fall. We need to keep up the fight on the tax bill and make Republicans own the impacts of their terrible bill. We can drive a wedge in their coalition and push back against authoritarianism, with healthcare cuts as the tip of the spear.

**We need better healthcare, not less healthcare, but Trump and Congressional Republicans voted to send our healthcare costs skyrocketing to pay for tax cuts for billionaires.**

## Why Now?

Cuts to the Affordable Care Act are one of the biggest early impacts of Trump's tax bill. Open enrollment, the period when people sign up for healthcare for 2026, starts November 1 (in most places). All states will have released their plan prices by this date and many people will be shocked to learn that their health insurance costs have doubled when they login to buy their plans for next year. This is not a drill, this is not hypothetical, real people will start shopping on November 1 and some will decide that coverage is too expensive and drop it altogether. Others will have to make excruciating decisions on how to afford care.

November 1 and the days surrounding it are a critical moment to come together on a unified message: Healthcare costs too much, the Republican bill makes it worse, and the Democrats are trying to save it.

## But what if the shutdown...?

Currently the government is shut down with Republicans refusing to negotiate over healthcare unless the Democrats vote to reopen the government. Democrats are currently holding firm over their position that they will not vote for a budget (or continuing resolution) unless it includes an extension of the healthcare tax credits and reversal of Medicaid cuts. Possible scenarios for what is happening during the Week of Action include:

1. The government is still shut down and there is no decision on healthcare.
2. The government is reopened but Congress has not come to a final decision on healthcare.

Both scenarios mean that telling the story of the harmful impact of these healthcare cuts is still a top priority.

3. The government is reopened and Congress has made a deal on healthcare.

If a bad deal has been made on the ACA tax credits, we will use the Week of Action to thank legislators that have supported a good deal and call out those who opposed and continue to talk about both the ACA tax credits and cuts to Medicaid.

If a good deal has been made on the ACA tax credits, but not on Medicaid, we will thank those who supported a good deal and call out those opposed and likely focus on the Medicaid cuts and broader impacts to the health ecosystem including hospital closings.

Democrats in the House and Senate have thrown their weight behind legislation to permanently extend the ACA tax credits and reverse the health care cuts in the Trump tax bill. There is one [proposal](#) to extend the tax credits for one year, led by Congresswoman Jen Kiggans (R-VA) that has a number of Republican co-sponsors and a few Democrats. They still want to raise healthcare costs, but think this will delay their impact until after the midterms. A vote to delay is still a vote to cut care and raise costs.

## Key Event Ideas

### Storytellers and Validators

The most important piece of any action is having personal stories of the direct impacts the cuts to the Affordable Care Act or Medicaid will cause. Because the ACA cuts are the top issue in the shutdown, finding people that buy their own insurance through the ACA marketplace is the top priority. Independent contractors, small business owners & employees, farmers, gig workers, hair stylists, nail technicians, are common professions that buy their insurance on the marketplace. Young people 26 and up that are no longer on their parents' plans and 50-64 year olds that don't yet qualify for Medicare and no longer work full-time are also big marketplace customers. People that WANT to buy their healthcare on the marketplace are also good candidates. We have had good storytellers from Medicaid users that no longer qualify and want to buy their insurance on the exchange instead.

Second best is finding validators who represent communities that will be impacted. This could be doctors, nurses, hospital staff, and community leaders. The healthcare cuts overall are putting a strain on rural and community hospitals and many of them are closing. In California, the director of the state health marketplace herself joined a [press conference](#) to speak out against the cuts.

These are the best spokespeople you can have at your event. Use the leadup to the week of action to ask around, survey your lists, and connect with other groups to identify 3-5 storytellers and validators.

Key elements of a good personal story:

- Why is healthcare important to them? Does it help them as a small business owner? Do they have a medical condition?
- How the cuts will impact them - how much will their costs go up? What might they lose?

Story Collection Form: If you've identified storytellers that are willing to share their stories with the press or members of Congress, please direct them to complete [this short form](#) so our team can follow up. Once someone submits an entry, our team will conduct vetting, consent, and verification on a rolling basis to confirm the storyteller's comfort level, ensure credibility, and check for any risk or privacy concerns. From there, storytellers will partner with our press and legislative teams — either for media opportunities or to share their stories directly with Members of Congress and staff. The storytelling form link is <https://bit.ly/tellyourhcstory>.

### **Top Tactic: In-person event at your Member of Congress**

The top tactic is to organize an event outside your Member of Congress's office with storytellers, validators, and supporters with signage. Invite the media and prepare the storytellers/validators to share their stories. If it's a Member that is supportive of protecting healthcare, invite them/their staff to join as well. If it's a Member that is against, prepare the storytellers and validators to go inside and share their stories with the office. Additional tactics could include delivering printed stories, a sign-on letter, or other materials.

### **Small Business Roundtable**

Convene a roundtable with small business owners and leaders who will be impacted by the loss of the healthcare tax credits. Invite the media and representatives from your local Members of Congress.

### **Street Theater/Halloween-Themed Tactics**

Follow lawmakers in-district while dressed as the grim reaper, signifying the death of healthcare. This is a fun and creative version of birddogging - similar to the 'billionaires for Trump' tactic in the past, this is perfect for the theatrical as the grim reaper is a fan of GOP policies. Healthcare vigils, a die-in, costume parties, are other ideas.

### **Call-In Day**

Keep the pressure on with calls into the district office from local constituents. Encourage people to share their stories and voice support for restoring the healthcare tax credits.

## **Digital Tactics**

### **November 3, #HealthcareHeist Social Media Day of Action**

Monday, November 3 will be a coordinated social media day of action. The top priority is to post testimonials from storytellers and validators. The [social media guide](#) links to graphics and other suggestions. Some suggested posts:

- Share stories from storytellers directly impacted by ACA price spikes. This can look like:
  - People recording a video with the screen showing their new healthcare premiums (don't show personal info or just discussing the numbers). See an example from

ESPA partner and content creator Michael Mezz [here](#), and a great, minimally-edited example from co-sponsor Main Street Alliance [here](#).

- Text posts of written submissions with quotes from impacted individuals. See a great example from co-sponsor Community Catalyst [here](#).
- Download and re-upload, or make a reaction video to, any of the high-performing videos on ACA cuts in our [ACA/Medicaid Social Content list!](#)
  - *Using existing content that has already proven to do well is consistently an excellent way to give your social media pages a reach + engagement boost on the ever-changing algorithms of social platforms, so we HIGHLY encourage this strategy. Just remember to tag the original creators in your caption!*
  - Our full [social media guide](#) has detailed instructions on how to do this.
- People talking about why healthcare is important to them
- Uplift/amplify others' posts! Search for the #healthcareheist hashtag, or search for any of the co-sponsors listed at the bottom of this toolkit to find posts.
- If you've done an action recently, re-up content from that with a new post
- **Please use #HealthcareHeist so we can find it!**

## Social Media Campaign

ESP's comprehensive social media guide lives [here](#). It includes guidance on recording videos, suggested posts to amplify, and other great materials.

For the week of action, work to collect stories, either written or digital to have content prepared. Some ideas include “I’ve got the receipts” or “unboxing” style videos where you record people looking up their plan prices. “Window shopping” where the actual prices are available to the public has started in at least a dozen states and you can refer [here](#). All prices will be available no later than November 1st. You can also play with the Halloween theme [here](#).

## Video/Written Story Collection

Collect video or written stories using ESP's tool [here](#). If you already have storytellers identified feel free to send them the form directly. Otherwise, send it to your lists, share through social media, or whatever your preferred method is. ESP will share those stories with members of Congress and the media. You can use [these sample materials](#) to email the tool to your networks, hand out flyers at events, and make a top-tier video.

## Host Your Event on Mobilize

Mobilize Event Page

Step 1: [Click this link](#) to navigate to the “Healthcare Heist” campaign page.

Step 2: **Fill in event details:** Provide the necessary information for your event. Any pre-filled suggested language can be changed. This includes:

- Event name

- Description and instructions
- Date and time (click "Add times +" to specify shifts if needed)
- Location (for virtual or in-person events)
- Contact information

Step 3: **Review and publish:** After filling out the form, you can review your event details. Once you are satisfied, click "Publish event" to make it live.

Step 4: **Invite people!** You can use the invite link to send to your lists and use Mobilize to manage signups. Be aware that Week of Action co-sponsors (other organizations) might also be directing members to the signup page if they have local members. You can see all hosted events [here](#). If you have any questions you can contact [events@economicsecurity.us](mailto:events@economicsecurity.us).

## Find an event near you

If you're not able to host an event, please share your story and also you can find an event near you or a virtual event [here](#).

## Messaging

- The cost of everything is going up, the last thing people can afford is more expensive healthcare.
- Trump and Congressional Republicans are cutting healthcare for everyday working families.
- In [STATE], premiums are [projected to rise](#) by \$X,XXX a year on average (see fig. 9, dollar change in linked source). Or refer to your state's [REAL](#) prices when available.
- *Insert testimonial from storyteller directly impacted.*
- Congress should work together NOW to make sure prices don't go up even more. Republicans cut healthcare and they can end this shutdown by giving it back.

The main frame we want to stay in is AFFORDABILITY. Emphasize costs, using real data or real stories from real people whenever possible. All states real prices will be available no later than November 1st with at least a dozen already available [now](#).

Full talking points and Q&A here [LINK](#).

## Media

Media coverage for your events is key to amplifying the message so more people know more about the healthcare cuts, what we're fighting for, and who is to blame. Invite the media to your event, make sure you have someone set up to take pictures and video so you can post to social media using #HealthcareHeist as well. Refer to the social media [guide](#) for tips on posts and recording great videos.

Sample press release here [LINK](#)



## Reporting Back

Let us know how your event went! Healthcare Heist [Reporting Form](#)

## Resources

All shared resources live [here](#). They will be updated on a rolling basis, including:

- [Graphics](#)
- [Story Collection Template Materials](#)
- [Protect Our Care Window Shopping Toolkit](#)
- [Main Street Alliance Healthcare and Taxes Toolkit](#)
- [Spanish Translated Materials](#)

## Co-Sponsors



Research Sponsor: Children's HealthWatch

*This campaign is part of ESP's broader Affordability Agenda — fighting for an economy where everyone can afford their basic needs, including healthcare. We're building on the momentum from our tax fight to demand Congress put working families before billionaire tax cuts.*