

BRING IT HOME

DOLLARS. JOBS. HEALTHCARE.

The Bring It Home campaign is a non-partisan effort by organizations and individuals to educate Tennesseans and policy makers about the need to make full use of federal Medicaid funding to address Tennessee's pressing health care needs. The state legislature passed a law in 2014 that bars the governor from accepting federal funds to expand Medicaid coverage to uninsured working families. It's time to repeal that law and put Tennesseans' own federal tax dollars to good use. An April 2018 poll shows registered voters favor Medicaid expansion by three to one.¹

The state law preventing Tennessee from using the federal funds has been costly in numerous ways. Repeal of the law is urgently needed for the following reasons:

- By the legislature's own estimate, Tennessee has lost – and continues to lose – \$1.4 billion annually (\$3.8 million/day) in federal health care funding.² These are Tennesseans' federal tax dollars that are being sent to Washington rather than being used here at home.
- That money would have generated 15,000 jobs, according to the University of Tennessee's Center for Business and Economic Research.³
- That funding could sustain Tennessee's hard-pressed hospitals.⁴ Though many hospitals are profitable, safety net facilities are in trouble. Tennessee has lost nine hospitals since 2010⁵, and has lost more hospitals for its size than any other state. A national study of states⁶ that accept the federal health funds shows that our legislature's bar on the use of those funds makes it six times more likely that a Tennessee hospital will be forced to close. The closing of a community's only hospital reduces access to care for everyone in that community, means the loss of a major employer and makes it impossible to recruit new businesses to the area.
- The federal funding would support services to prevent and treat opiate addiction, which has reached crisis proportions across the state. In 2016, a legislative task force recommended changing the law to allow use of the federal funds to cover uninsured Tennesseans with mental health and addiction problems, but the legislature never acted on the recommendation.
- The failure to use federal health funds makes health insurance premiums more costly for everyone.⁷
- The federal health funding would provide health insurance to 300,000 working Tennesseans, affording them the financial security and access to affordable health care that is only available to those with coverage.⁸

Learn more and sign up for email updates about how you can get involved at
<https://www.tnjustice.org/bring-it-home-tennessee/>.

¹ <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2018/05/07/medicaid-expansion-poll-tennessee-support/586006002/>

² <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/109/Fiscal/SJR0094.pdf>.

³ <http://cber.haslam.utk.edu/pubs/bfox304.pdf>.

⁴ <https://apps.health.tn.gov/publicjars/default.aspx>.

⁵ <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/finance/state-by-state-breakdown-of-83-rural-hospital-closures.html>

(This list does not include McKenzie Regional Hospital, which closed Sept. 15, 2018:

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/finance/quorum-closes-tennessee-hospital.html>)

⁶ <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.0976>.

⁷ http://familiesusa.org/sites/default/files/product_documents/hidden-health-tax.pdf.

⁸ <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/109/Fiscal/SJR0094.pdf>.