



Arnold Ventures Funds Groups Siding with Democrats on Funding Healthcare for Illegal Immigrants

Last fall, President Trump, his administration, and Congressional Republicans [took a stand](#) against using taxpayer money to fund healthcare for illegal immigrants and non-citizens. Meanwhile, Democrats shut down the federal government over their demands to ensure illegal immigrants could receive taxpayer benefits. Since 2020, Arnold Ventures has spent nearly \$10 million funding liberal think tanks in Washington that advocated federal benefits for illegal immigrants.

The President’s Working Families Tax Cut Act – also known as One Big Beautiful Bill – included important provisions to limit federal healthcare benefits for illegal immigrants to ensure that taxpayer dollars are reserved for United States citizens, legal permanent residents, and individuals lawfully present in the country. Democrats, however, railed against these reforms and held government operations hostage to demand these reforms be repealed.

The Trump administration has [made it a priority](#) to prevent the exploitation of federal programs by illegal immigrants, and President Trump has [called out](#) the unseriousness of Democrats wanting to continue the subversion of a safety net meant to protect the most vulnerable Americans. What has gone unnoticed, however, is that a look into Arnold Ventures’ giving shows that the ostensibly bipartisan organization is squarely on the side of Democrats wanting to protect federal healthcare spending on illegal immigrants.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Favors an “Inclusive Approach to Immigrants Who Are Undocumented”

The Laura and John Arnold Foundation has given more than \$2 million to the Washington, D.C.-based [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) since 2020.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has criticized President Trump’s immigration policy since his first term, writing in a [2019 report](#) that “the Trump Administration’s harmful rhetoric and administrative actions targeting immigrants ... have created a climate of fear — especially among families with immigrants who are undocumented.”

LAURA AND JOHN ARNOLD FOUNDATION GRANTS TO THE CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

2020	\$211,829
2021	\$68,397
2022	\$256,920
2023	\$350,000
2024	\$1,145,060
Total	\$2,032,206

Source: [ProPublica](#)

The thrust of that report is that taking an “inclusive approach to immigrants who are undocumented can help families and states prosper,” and the authors advocate for four specific policies that can be enacted at the state and local levels:

1. Allowing illegal immigrants to obtain driver’s licenses.
2. Allowing illegal immigrant students to pay in-state tuition and to obtain state financial aid.
3. Strengthening labor law enforcement to apply to illegal immigrant workers.
4. Expanding access to health coverage to all children regardless of immigration status.

The authors favor extending health coverage to undocumented children, arguing that expanding care to all children “is a smart investment in a state’s long-term health and prosperity.” In their view, however, providing healthcare to all children is merely an incremental step towards the goal of “access to health care coverage for all” – meaning all illegal immigrants.

“Extending health care to all children, regardless of immigration status, is a smart investment in a state’s long-term health and prosperity. It is also a strong first step towards access to health care coverage for all.”

- [Erica Williams, Eric Figueroa, and Wesley Tharpe](#)

Brookings Wants More Federally Backed Clinics and to Expand Medicaid Eligibility to Illegal Immigrants

Brookings – a [Washington, D.C.-based think tank](#) – has received more than \$5.7 million from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation since 2020.

LAURA AND JOHN ARNOLD FOUNDATION GRANTS TO BROOKINGS	
2020	\$679,581
2021	\$338,372
2022	\$1,294,404
2023	\$1,514,488
2024	\$1,873,982
Total	\$5,700,827

Source: [ProPublica](#)

For its part, Brookings has advanced two policy recommendations to expand healthcare for illegal immigrants. First, as part of its [Blueprints for American Renewal & Prosperity](#) project, Brookings has proposed expanding the system of community health centers with direct federal funding to provide primary care services to illegal immigrants. As Scholar in Residence for Economic Studies Stuart M. Butler [writes](#), the first step in achieving an equitable and effective health system in America “should be to expand the system of community health centers in underserved areas and provide greater long-term funding certainty. [...] With direct support from the federal government, local support, and Medicaid and Medicare funding, the clinics provide a broad range of primary care services to families, including uninsured and undocumented patients.” Butler favored expanding direct federal funding for

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) beyond the roughly \$6 billion per year they received at the time “with an emphasis on areas of greatest need.”

Second, as part of their policy prescriptions to improve Latino health, Brookings [proposed](#) expanding Medicaid eligibility to illegal immigrants as part of any COVID-19 bills, arguing that “[f]uture COVID-19 bills should expand Medicaid eligibility to cover the medical needs of undocumented citizens (the Democrats’ HEROES Act does this).” As a broader policy, Brookings also advocated for passing Senator Cory Booker’s (D-NJ) [Health Equity and Access under Law \(HEAL\) for Immigrant Families Act](#), which would allow illegal immigrants to purchase health plans through the Affordable Care Act marketplace with eligibility for premium-tax credits and cost-sharing reductions.

“Healthcare for undocumented immigrants: Half of all foreign-born, non-citizen Latinos lack health insurance. The first COVID-19 stimulus bill passed in March notably did not expand Medicaid eligibility to undocumented immigrants, excluding many of them from COVID-19 testing and treatment options, even as many put themselves at risk working essential jobs. Future COVID-19 bills should expand Medicaid eligibility to cover the medical needs of undocumented citizens (the Democrats’ HEROES Act does this). More generally, bills like the HEAL Act should be passed to expand immigrants’ access to Medicaid. Since 77 percent of all undocumented immigrants are from Latin America, these policies are largely a Latino health issue.”

- [Ariel Gelrud Shiro and Richard V. Reeves](#)

The National Partnership for Women and Families Advocates for Public Health Insurance for Illegal Immigrants

The National Partnership for Women and Families is an [advocacy organization](#) based in Washington, D.C. Since 2020, the organization has received \$643,583 from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation.

LAURA AND JOHN ARNOLD FOUNDATION GRANTS TO THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES	
2020	-
2021	-
2022	\$293,750
2023	-
2024	\$349,833
Total tal	\$643,583

Source: [ProPublica](#)

In a [2021 report](#) on what they describe as a systemic failure of the U.S. maternity care system, the National Partnership for Women and Families lamented the fact that “[u]ndocumented immigrants are prohibited from obtaining federally funded health care through Medicaid, CHIP, or the Affordable Care

Act marketplaces” and harshly criticized the “constellation of discriminatory laws and policies [that] leave limited affordable health care options for immigrants.”

Describing healthcare as a basic human right, the organization calls for Congress to pass the aforementioned [Health Equity and Access under Law \(HEAL\) for Immigrant Families Act](#) “to expand immigrants’ eligibility for health insurance coverage and access to care, including maternity and infant care and sexual and reproductive health services.” According to the authors of the bill, the HEAL Act explicitly “removes the current restrictions that prevent undocumented immigrants from purchasing care through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace while ensuring these individuals are able to obtain premium-tax credits and cost-sharing reductions.”

In a [separate piece](#) exploring the “reproductive injustices faced by undocumented Latinas,” Health Justice Policy Associate Lorena Bonet Velazquez writes that the “barriers imposed by immigration status and exclusion from social safety net programs leaves undocumented Latine women vulnerable to harm and misinformation.” In arguing for Congress to pass the HEAL Act, Velazquez writes that the U.S. should “ensure immigration status doesn’t bar anyone from accessing care” and that “all immigrants, regardless of status, have access to public and affordable health coverage.”

“... immigrants are systematically denied health care. A constellation of discriminatory laws and policies leave limited affordable health care options for immigrants, thereby compounding the harm they experience. Health care is a basic human right, and it is crucial that we ensure access to high quality, language-accessible, and culturally congruent health care services for all people in the United States, including immigrants, to ensure their health, well-being, and dignity.”

- [Asees Bhasin](#)

The Center for American Progress Supports Multiple Workarounds to Provide Public Health Coverage to Illegal Immigrants

The Center for American Progress (CAP) is a Democratic think tank [headed](#) by a former Biden Administration official. Since 2020, CAP has received more than \$1.5 million from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation.

LAURA AND JOHN ARNOLD FOUNDATION GRANTS TO THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS	
2020	\$512,500
2021	\$392,864
2022	\$25,000
2023	\$250,000
2024	\$331,661
Total	\$1,512,025

Source: [ProPublica](#)

In furtherance of its goal to provide public healthcare to illegal immigrants, the Center for American Progress has proposed multiple workarounds to extend coverage to the undocumented population. In 2012, for example, CAP [argued](#) in favor of granting legal status to the 11 million illegal immigrants

in the country at the time in order to unlock a host of benefits including public healthcare coverage. Senior Fellow Marshall Fitz reasoned that barring “undocumented immigrants from buying insurance through the state-based exchanges ... will undoubtedly compromise the system’s ability to lower costs.” In his view, “bringing undocumented immigrants into the health insurance system seems obvious from a cost-containment perspective” and that “it is plainly good policy from a health care and economics perspective” to extend meaningful coverage to undocumented immigrants.

CAP would later [return](#) to the same argument in 2022 when it posited that “[p]utting undocumented immigrants on a pathway to citizenship is ... a matter of health and economic justice that would enable them to access protections that both they and their families deserve.”

In 2017, CAP [proposed](#) making health insurance available to LGBTQ illegal immigrants through state and local action to bypass federal restrictions. The authors noted that “[a]lthough federal law prohibits unauthorized immigrants from accessing federal benefits such as Medicaid or buying health insurance from state exchanges, cities and states can offer their own health plans to residents, allowing everyone access to health care.” One such example that the authors cited was the DC Healthcare Alliance established in 2001 in Washington, D.C. to provide health insurance to any D.C. resident regardless of immigration status. This program cost the city \$58 million in taxpayer money in fiscal year 2017.

“Although federal law prohibits unauthorized immigrants from accessing federal benefits such as Medicaid or buying health insurance from state exchanges, cities and states can offer their own health plans to residents, allowing everyone access to health care. In 2001, then-Washington, D.C., Mayor Tony Williams established the DC Healthcare Alliance, making health insurance available to any resident of the district regardless of immigration status. Today some 15,000 residents are enrolled and the District of Columbia has allocated \$58 million to fund the program in fiscal year 2017. Mayors can establish similar locally funded health insurance programs to ensure no resident is excluded from the opportunity to purchase health insurance due to being ineligible, unable to afford to purchase insurance through the retail market, and/or not covered through an employer or Medicaid.”

- [Laura E. Durso, Caitlin Rooney, Sharita Gruberg, Sejal Singh, Shabab Ahmed Mirza, Frank J. Bewkes, Aaron Ridings, and Daniel Clark](#)

Similarly, in 2023 the Center for American Progress [outlined](#) how states could use Section 1332 waivers under the Affordable Care Act to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Treasury Department to provide health coverage to illegal immigrants. In the report, CAP Director of Health Policy Natasha Murphy “highlights a newer generation of waiver applications from Colorado, Washington, and Nevada that aim to improve health care affordability by supporting state public options and expanding access to previously ineligible populations—including undocumented individuals.”

In 2022, Washington “became the first state to file a waiver application with CMS to allow undocumented immigrants, including families with mixed immigration statuses, to purchase health

and dental insurance on the state marketplace,” and the state further “sought approval to offer state subsidies to undocumented residents with family incomes at or below 250 percent of the FPL who enroll in Cascade Care, the state’s public option standardized plans.” In Colorado, the state “proposed using pass-through funds to finance state subsidies for individuals with incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), including undocumented individuals.”

PrEP4All Supports a Federally Funded Program to Provide Free HIV Medicine to Illegal Immigrants

PrEP4All was [founded](#) in 2018 to increase access to HIV medication and has received nearly \$120,000 from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation since 2020.

LAURA AND JOHN ARNOLD FOUNDATION GRANTS TO PREP4ALL

2020	-
2021	-
2022	-
2023	\$110,000
2024	\$9,513
Total	\$119,513

Source: [ProPublica](#)

As a part of its core mission, PrEP4All advocates for greater access to antiretroviral medication for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent new HIV infections. In furtherance of this goal, in 2024 the organization [released a plan](#) for a national PrEP program that would rely on federal funding to create “an integrated and simple delivery system for PrEP.” Central to the concept is a “PrEP Pass” that operates as a printable or virtual card that allows holders – including illegal immigrants – to receive PrEP services at zero cost. As the organization contends, “A program that provides a safety net for un- and underinsured individuals is critical to addressing inequities. ... This is a question of equity, as uninsured individuals in America are more likely to come from communities of color and undocumented communities.” Under the proposed program, “[t]he PrEP Pass concept would ideally be accessed through only minimal application paperwork that is also accessible to undocumented individuals, avoiding financial eligibility forms or overly cumbersome renewals.”

“Emphasize simplicity, comprehensiveness, and flexibility. The PrEP Pass concept would ideally be accessed through only minimal application paperwork that is also accessible to undocumented individuals, avoiding financial eligibility forms or overly cumbersome renewals. The Pass should function as easily as a manufacturer assistance card when presented at the pharmacy and lead to zero cost sharing for generic TDF/FTC access.”

- [PrEP4All](#)

Arnold Ventures Backs Groups Aligned with Democrats on Providing Healthcare for Illegal Immigrants

Contrary to the carefully curated image of being a bipartisan organization, Arnold Ventures' spending gives great insight into how it invests funding into groups that are working steadfastly against President Trump's highest policy priorities. In this case, Arnold Ventures has backed organizations that are in lock step with Democrats on public funding for healthcare for illegal immigrants. For Congressional Democrats, [repealing H.R. 1](#) and the reforms it contained to limit federal health benefits to illegal immigrants was so central to the Democratic party that they were willing to shut down the federal government for 43 days.

