and the state’s fiscal situation, Rauner’s leadership is urgently needed.

The ACHC threatens drastic Medicaid cuts and opens the possibility of losing the Essential Health Benefits coverage provided by the Affordable Care Act. Medicaid cuts (either through block grants or per capita funding caps) would devastate health care in Illinois through reductions in health insurance coverage to millions of Illinois Medicaid beneficiaries, including 600,000 people covered by the Medicaid expansion. If Medicaid expansion ended, in 2019 alone Illinois would lose an estimated $3.1 billion of federal funds. A state with a structural budget deficit because of insufficient revenue cannot afford further funding losses.

When people lack access to health care, their health declines, they are less able to work or contribute to their families and communities, and their care costs more in emergency rooms.

All seven of Illinois’ congressional Republicans voted for the ACHC and are likely to vote on any related Senate bill. Rauner has influence among Illinois’ congressional delegation and needs to speak up for all Illinoisans. On health care, the governor can either step up to the plate or head for the dugout.

WEISLEY EPPLEIN
Director of health policy, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

Create is a vital plan for freight

We appreciate Create’s calling attention to the vital importance of freight to our regional economy. About 25 percent of all freight trains and 30 percent of all intermodal trains in the nation pass through metropolitan Chicago, home to the continent’s main interchange of western and eastern railroads. The economic multipliers are staggering. Approximately 1.1 billion square feet of industrial development here support freight and manufacturing activity. Industries that rely on frequent shipment of goods—manufacturing, construction, retail trade and wholesale trade—collectively represent more than one-quarter of all our region’s jobs and add over $100 billion per year to the regional economy.

Create’s stories “Why Hunter Harrison doesn’t want freight here” (April 28) and “Investors tout $2.8 billion plan to get around Chicago’s rail bottleneck” (May 3) did, however, overlook a critical point: the vital importance of completing Create.

Starting in 2006, the Create public-private partnership has advanced a very well-defined program of 70 projects to reduce freight congestion in the greater Chicago region. To date, 29 Create projects are complete, with six more under construction, 17 in their design stages and 19 awaiting further funding. The national and regional importance of Create is too important for us to prematurely shift the spotlight to projects like the Great Lakes Basin Transportation proposal. With Create completed, the risk of diversions would be diminished and existing rail infrastructure optimized.

Moving freight more efficiently through our region is the goal, and it is paramount to the continued success of the region’s and nation’s economy.

JOSEPH C. SZABO
Executive director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

CRAIN’S CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BREAKFAST

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2017
3:00 - 4:30 A.M.

UNIVERSITY CLUB OF CHICAGO | 76 E. MONROE STREET, CHICAGO
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CFOs of four companies that have thrived amid rapid technological change – Cars.com, Grubhub, Allscripts and the Options Clearing Corporation – will discuss how they’re managing risk during a time of political, societal and economic volatility.

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