

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

March 23, 2009

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Senate Budget Committee
U.S. Senate
Room 624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Senate Budget Committee
U.S. Senate
Room 624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Room 207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6065

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Room B-71 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6065

Dear Chairman Conrad, Chairman Spratt, and Ranking Members Gregg and Ryan:

Health Care for America Now is a national grassroots movement powered by millions of people working to win in 2009 a guarantee of quality, affordable health care we all can count on. We are writing to communicate our support for a strong Congressional Budget Resolution that provides the necessary resources and flexibility to enact a guarantee of quality, affordable health care for everyone in America.

President Obama has said again and again that to fix our economy, we must fix health care and we must do it in 2009. And to achieve this, we need to make the necessary investments. As the President stated at the recent White House Forum on Health Reform, "So what we constantly have to think about is short-term costs versus even higher long-term costs. And what I'm trying to do in this debate is make sure that we're focused not just on year one and year two, but on year 10, year 20, year 30 and year 50, and making sure that our children are not bankrupted." The Administration's budget puts money behind those words with a significant investment of \$634 billion identified over ten years as an initial down payment on fixing health care.

Health Care for America Now is looking to your leadership to craft a Budget Resolution that enables health care reform to happen this year. Specifically, we are requesting that the Congressional Budget Resolution --

- Recognize that the President proposed a minimum down payment of \$634 billion, and provide sufficient additional funding authority to enact comprehensive health care reform that makes health care affordable to families and businesses.

- Enable large upfront investments in health care now in order to achieve longer-term savings in health care without requiring spending and revenue offsets for the entire cost of health reform within a ten year budget window – a position supported by groups as varied as AARP, Business Roundtable, AFL-CIO and the National Federation of Independent Business.
- Reinvest health care savings, including the President’s proposed savings from the Medicare Advantage program, into Medicare and broader health care system reforms.
- Support new revenue sources from the wealthiest Americans, such as the President’s proposal to limit itemized deductions for high income persons.
- Identify other revenue sources and/or offsets as long as they do not increase the health care burden on average Americans.
- Protect health care reform from a filibuster by including in the Budget Resolution the option of using the budget reconciliation process for health care reform.

As you well know, we cannot wait any longer for action on comprehensive health care reform. Our economy, our families, and our businesses are drowning in health care costs that are out of control. Every moment we wait, we fall farther behind. We are counting on Congress to make health care reform happen this year.

We appreciate your support on these critical items. We look forward to continuing to work with you to enact a guarantee of quality, affordable health care in 2009 that includes the choice of keeping the health insurance you have or joining a new public health insurance plan with benefits that meet our needs. We need health coverage that is affordable for individuals, families, and businesses, and we need equality in health care access, research, and resources to people and communities of color.

Sincerely,



Richard Kirsch
 National Campaign Manager
 On behalf of the Steering Committee of Health Care for America Now

Health Care for America Now Steering Committee

- ACORN - AFL-CIO - American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
- Americans United for Change - Campaign for America’s Future
- Center for American Progress Action Fund - Campaign for Community Change
- Children’s Defense Fund Action Council - Communications Workers of America - MoveOn.org
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People - National Council of La Raza
- National Education Association - National Women’s Law Center
- Service Employees International Union - United Food and Commercial Workers
- USAction - Working America