

STATE LEGISLATORS FOR SINGLE PAYER HEALTHCARE - HR 676

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Dear Colleague:

As the economic crisis deepens, the hardships and needs facing our constituents continue to grow greater. At the same time, our state budgets are badly strained.

While there are no easy solutions, in the area of health care reform, there are real prospects for tangible relief. The U.S. Congress can help to heal our hemorrhaging state budgets while bringing comprehensive, quality health care to all of our people, by passing HR676, Rep. John Conyers' national single-payer health care legislation.

In contrast to many other proposed health reforms, single payer provides the means to assure universal care and cost control, with no increase in total health care spending. A single-payer system has the additional advantage of broad support among the U.S. population and physicians - please take a moment to review the website of Physicians for a National Health Program (www.pnhp.org).

We are sending the enclosed **Appeal** to all fellow state legislators in the United States, and we believe that a significant number will join us by signing. We intend to publish the Appeal and the names of all the signers in *Roll Call* (www.rollcall.com), which is why we are asking you to make a financial contribution. We will also hold press conferences, and seek meetings with the National Conference of State Legislators and the National Governor's Conference to advance our position. Your suggestions are welcome.

Please indicate your willingness to sign the Appeal by returning the enclosed form through regular mail, Email, or fax. Please let us know if you wish to be further involved in promoting this Appeal.

Yours for a healthy nation,

Initiating Sponsors:

Senator Joyce Foster, 35th District, Colorado

Representative John Kefalas, 52nd District, Colorado
Health and Human Services

Senator Nan G. Orrock, 36th District, Georgia
Health and Human Services

Representative Stephanie Benfield, 85th District, Georgia

Representative Joni Jenkins, 44th District, Kentucky
Medicaid Oversight and Advisory; Health and Welfare

Representative Jim Wayne, 35th District, Kentucky
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Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

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AN APPEAL

To President Obama and Members of the 111th Congress

As state legislators, we are accustomed to dealing with budget uncertainties and program trade-offs, but now our states are being battered by the worst economic crisis in decades. For most states, revenues have plunged while needs escalate.

One of the greatest challenges we face is health care. Every state is facing shortfalls in Medicaid and other health programs as demand rises. The cost of providing health insurance for state employees grows faster than the funds to pay the bills. Legacy health care costs for retirees and future beneficiaries threaten state governments, and invite comparison with the situation facing the automobile industry and other industries.

We believe that meeting the challenge of rising health care costs and declining coverage is a national responsibility. Only a national program that removes the waste and inefficiency of our corporate dominated system can truly address the problems that all of us face.

Numerous state-based health reforms over the past two decades have failed to deliver on their promises of universal coverage, in large measure because they kept the private health insurance industry as a key player in the system. As a result, these would-be reforms did not insure everyone, and did not contain costs.

H.R. 676, The United States National Health Care Act (or Expanded and Improved Medicare for All), sponsored by Representative John Conyers of Michigan, provides a superb vehicle to bring necessary medical care to everyone, while saving hundreds of billions by eliminating the waste of the private, for-profit insurance system. The single-payer, not-for-profit funding mechanism makes it possible to shift \$380 billion to improve care. Only through a single-payer plan, an improved Medicare for All, can we bring costs under control and assure patient freedom of choice while expanding care.

President Obama stated in the presidential debates that he believes health care is a right. Polls show nearly two-thirds of the U.S. public believes that the federal government should guarantee health care to all through a single-payer system of national health insurance. A recent survey of American physicians revealed that 59% support government action to create a national health insurance system. For additional information regarding the benefits of a single-payer system, we urge you to review the website of Physicians for a National Health Program (www.pnhp.org).

The U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously passed a resolution in support of H.R. 676. The Presbyterian Church USA, the Union for Reform Judaism, the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, the Unitarian Universalists, the Episcopal Urban Caucus, and the United Church of Christ have all passed resolutions supporting single-payer health care reform.

H.R. 676 has been endorsed by: state legislative chambers in Kentucky, New Hampshire, and New York; dozens of city councils and county governments; nearly 500 unions, including 39 state AFL-CIO's and 120 labor councils.

We call upon the members of the 111th Congress, in both the House and Senate, to co-sponsor, support and pass H.R. 676 and upon President Obama to sign this legislation. This program will offer state and local governments a real opportunity to reduce the impact of the economic crisis, and establish for the people of the United States an efficient, effective health care financing system that will assure health care for everyone in our nation.

State Legislators for Single Payer Healthcare - HR 676

YES, I endorse the "*Appeal to President Obama and Members of the 111th Congress*"

Please contact me as I wish to help with this effort

I enclose a check for \$_____ as a contribution to publish the 'Appeal' and list of endorsers in the Roll Call (Please make checks payable to Roll Call)

NAME (please print) _____

Signature _____

Title (as you wish it to appear) _____

District _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____ FAX _____

Please return this Appeal form to:
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