An open letter to President Barack Obama and Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives in support of strong affordability and coverage provisions in final health reform legislation

Dear President Obama and Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives:

The United States is closer than ever before to making quality affordable health care available to all families.

Yet, health care reform can only succeed if it makes coverage truly affordable for ordinary families who are finding it more and more difficult to get the care they need. Requiring people to purchase health insurance that costs too much and covers too little would frustrate the fundamental goals of health reform and undermine the public support needed to pass and sustain reform.

The House of Representatives has passed health reform legislation that would cover 36 million people, 96 percent of all legal residents. The House covers five million more people than the Senate. We urge you to support the coverage provisions in the House bill, so that millions of Americans are not left uninsured after the passage of comprehensive health reform.

On the critical question of making coverage affordable, the House legislation sets premiums and out-of-pocket costs at levels that are likely to be affordable to lower-income working families. The House does a much better job in protecting lower-income people. The Senate approach provides somewhat better protections for middle-income workers, but would require lower-wage workers to buy insurance that costs many thousands of dollars more than the House legislation. We urge you to take the best elements of both approaches to create legislation that would protect all families from costs they cannot afford.

The undersigned are not collectively endorsing or supporting every element of either the House or Senate legislation, but we are unified in believing that (1) the House does a far better job at extending coverage to many more people; (2) that the House sets premium and out-of-pocket costs for lower-income workers at levels that are essential to the success of health reform; and (3) the Senate protections for middle-income families should be included in the final bill.
Therefore, we strongly urge President Obama and Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to take the best elements of both bills in crafting final legislation that works for all families.

Sincerely,

Signed by more than 750 organizations, organizational leaders, congregations, clergy and local and state elected officials, from 46 states, representing more than 100 million people.

National organizations

Mr. Robert Restuccia, Executive Director, Community Catalyst
Mr. Ron Pollack, Executive Director, Families USA
Mr. Gerald Smith, Coordinator, Health Rights Organizing Project
Rev. Dr. George Cummings, National Steering Committee Co-Chair, PICO National Network
Mr. Andy Stern, President, Service Employees International Union
Rev. Thomas H. Smolich, S.J., President, Jesuit Conference USA
Mr. Ron Byler, Acting Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA, Elkhart, Indiana
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Ms. Anastassia Zinke, National Council of Churches of the USA,
Rev. David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Union for Reform Judaism
Mr. James E. Winkler, General Secretary, United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Ms. Victoria L. Kovari, Interim President, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Rev. Jennifer Hope Kottler, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Sojourners
Rev. Linda Hanna Walling, Faithful Reform in Health Care
Ms. Nancy Brown, CEO, American Heart Association National
AARP
Consumers Union
Ms. Lisa Codispoti, National Women’s Law Center
National Council of La Raza
Mr. Jeff Blum, Executive Director, USA Action,
Mr. Richard Kirsch, Campaign Manager, Health Care for America Now
Mr. Deepak Bhargava, Executive Director, Campaign for Community Change
National Partnership for Women & Families
Ms. Tiffany Gardner, JD, National Economic and Social Rights Initiative
Ms. Helena R Berger, Chief Operating Officer, American Association of People with Disabilities*
Mr. Andrew H Mott, Executive Director, Community Learning Partnership
Mr. Doni Remba, Executive Director, Jewish Alliance for Change
Mr. Cliff Frasier, Faith Coordinator, SEIU Faith Initiative
Ms. Carol Regan, Director, PHI Health Care for Health Care Workers
Ms. Meredith L Dodson, Director of Domestic Campaigns, RESULTS
Mr. William E Arnold, CEO, Community Access National Network  
Dr. Jean Silver-Isenstadt, MD, PhD, Executive Director, National Physicians Alliance  
Dr. Robert Crittenden, Executive Director, Herrdon Alliance  
Romal J. Tune, CEO, Clergy Strategic Alliances  
Ms. Heather Stone, Change That Works  
Mr. Carl E Schmid, Deputy Executive Director, The AIDS Institute  
Mr. William Arnold, Executive Director, Community Access National Network  

Local, State and Regional Organizations:  

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Mr. John Zippert, Director of Program Operations, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Epes, Alabama  
Mr. Kimble Forrister, State Coordinator, Alabama Arise, Montgomery, Alabama  
Mr. John A Pickens, Executive Director, Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice, Inc., Montgomery, Alabama  
Dr. Marsha D Raulerson, Medical Director, Lower Alabama Pediatrics*, Brewton, Alabama  

Arizona  
Mr. Dana Wolfe Naimark, President/CEO, Children's Action Alliance, Phoenix, Arizona  
Arizona Advocacy Network  

Arkansas  
Rev. Wendell L. Griffen, Pastor, New Millennium Church*, Little Rock, Arkansas  
Mr. Rich Huddleston, Executive Director, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, Little Rock, Arkansas  
Rev. Steve Copley, Arkansas Interfaith Alliance  
Maxine Nelson, Member, Watson Chapel School Board, Arkansas  
Donna Massey, Justice of the Peace, District 6, Pulaski County Quorum Court, Arkansas  
Change that Works Arkansas  

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Faith In Community-PICO, Fresno, CA  
Mr. Lee Penrose, President & CEO, St. Jude Medical Center, Fullerton, California  
Rev. Drew S Nettinga, Associate Conference Minister, Northern California Nevada Conference, United Church of Christ*, Hayward, California  
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Congregations Organizing for Renewal-PICO, Hayward, CA  
Fr. Michael J. Mandala, S.J., Pastor, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Hollywood, California  
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Mr. Robert Hildebrand, President, Greater Long Beach Interfaith Community Organization-PICO*, Long Beach, California
Rev. Anna Olson, Associate Rector, St. Luke's Episcopal Church*, Long Beach, California
Ms. Lou Quitugua, Training Coordinator, Guam Communications Network, Long Beach, California
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Rabbi Adam Nathan Rosenwasser, Congregation Beth Am*, Los Altos Hills, California
Rabbi Stephen J Stein, Los Angeles, California
LA Voice-PICO, Los Angeles, CA
Mr. Philip G Curtis, Director, Government Affairs, AIDS Project Los Angeles*, Los Angeles, California
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Ms. Nancy Berlin, Director, California Partnership, Los Angeles, California
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Rabbi Melanie Aron, Rabbi, Congregation Shir Hadash*, Los Gatos, California
Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization-PICO, Martinez, CA
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Congregations Building Communities Modesto-PICO, Modesto, CA
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Pastor Geoffrey C Blake, Paradise Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church*, National City, California
Rev. Gregg L Brown, Pastor, Miracles of Faith Community Church(ELCA)*, Oakland, California
Rev. Dr. Leon H Bacchues, Associate Pastor, Cosmopolitan Health & Human Services*, Oakland, California
Fr. Jesus Nieto-Ruiz, Pastor, St. Anthony Catholic Church*, Oakland, California
Ms. Alice A Spearman, Director, OUSD Board of Education, Board Member, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland, California
Rev. Allison J Tanner, Associate Pastor, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland, California
Ms. Cary Sanders, Director, Having Our Say! Coalition, Oakland, California
Rev. Dr. H James Hopkins, Pastor, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland, California
Mr. Martin Martinez, Policy Director, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, Oakland, California
Ms. Naina Khanna, Coordinator, U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN)*, Oakland, California
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Rev. Catherine Kay Doyle (retired), Sacramento, California
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Rev. Dr. Vernon K Rempel, First Mennonite Church of Denver*, Denver, Colorado
Rev. Nelson Bock, Our Savior's Lutheran Church*, Denver, Colorado
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Ms. Judith Evans, Executive Director, National Alliance for Mental Illness- Florida, Florida
Mr. Bob Sharpe, Executive Director, Florida Council for Community Mental Health, Florida
Ms. Chrystal Hutchinson, Florida Consumer Action Network, Florida
Ms. Daniella Levine, Executive Director, Human Services Coalition, Florida
Ms. Cheri Wright Jones, Executive Director, Tampa Bay Health Care Collaborative, Florida

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Rev. Eugene H Winkler, Pastor, University Church*, Chicago, Illinois
Mr. John M Bouman, President, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, Chicago, Illinois
Rev. Dr. Dennis Jacobsen, Director, Gamaliel National Clergy Caucus, Gamaliel National Clergy Caucus, Chicago, Illinois
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Mr. Dan Kenney, Co-Coordinator, DeKalb Interfaith Network for Peace and Justice*, DeKalb, Illinois
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Change that Works Indiana

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Mrs. Karen Gardner, Executive Director, Tri-Generations LLC, Campbellsville, Kentucky
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Dr. Sheila A. Schuster, Executive Director, Advocacy Action Network, Louisville, Kentucky
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Rev. Dr. Robert Slocum, President, NAMI Kentucky*, Somerset, Kentucky
Ms. Jamie S Burton, CEO, The Adanta Group*, Somerset, Kentucky

Louisiana
Ms. Rosia Metoyer, Executive Director, Alexandria Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, Alexandria, Louisiana
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Change that Works Louisiana
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Mr. Donovan K Hudson, Louisiana Grassroots Lobby*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
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Ms. Tracie L Washington, Managing Director, Louisiana Justice Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana
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Mr. Endesha Jukali, New Day Community Organization, New Orleans, Louisiana
Ms. Cherice Harrison-Nelson, Director, Mardi Gras Indian Hall of Fame*, New Orleans, Louisiana
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Mr. Sam L Jackson, Exec, Director, Mayday New Orleans, Inc*, New Orleans, Louisiana
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Ms. Ruth E Blauer, Executive Director, The Maine Association of Substance Abuse Programs*, Augusta, Maine
Ms. Sarah Standiford, Executive Director, Maine Women's Lobby, Augusta, Maine
Hon. Gary T. McGrane, County Commissioner, Franklin County Commissioners, Farmington, Maine
Mr. Randall F Roberts, Retired President, Chase Home Furnishings Inc.*, Unity, Maine
Mr. Phil Bailey, Maine Change That Works, Maine
Ms. Jill Saxby, Executive Director, Maine Council of Churches, Maine
Ms. Sara Gagne-Holmes, Executive Director, Maine Equal Justice Partners, Maine
Ms. Kim Moody, Executive Director, Disability Rights Center, Maine
Ms. Juliana L'Heureux, Maine Association of Mental Health Services, Maine
Ms. Ellie Goldberg, Maine Children's Alliance, Maine
Mr. Jesse Graham, Executive Director, Maine People's Alliance, Maine

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Ms. Karen Elliott, President, Baltimore Ethical Society, Baltimore, Maryland
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Mr. Izatta Spikes, Health Policy Director, NAACP Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland
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Mr. C.D. Witherspoon, President, African American Democratic Clubs of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland
Ms. Daphne McClellan, President, National Association of Social Workers - Maryland Chapter, Baltimore, Maryland
Ms. Kristine Dunkerton, Executive Director, Community Law Center, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland
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Rev. Katherine A Murray, Hope Lutheran Church*, Clinton, Maryland
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Mr. John G. O'Brien, President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health Care*, Worcester, Massachusetts
Deacon Theodore E Lukac, Massachusetts
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Mr. Grant Stevenson, President, ISAIAH, Minnesota
Ms. Julie Schnell, President, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, Minnesota
Mr. Dan McGrath, Executive Director, Take Action Minnesota, Minnesota

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Hon. Mike Talboy, State Representative, Missouri House of Representatives, Kansas City, Missouri
Ms. Susan McLoughlin, Executive Director, Mother & Child Health Coalition, Kansas City, Missouri
Hon. Theresa Garza Ruiz, Legislator, Jackson County Legislature, Kansas City, Missouri
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Hon. Margaret MacDonald, State Legislator, HD 54, Billings, Montana
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Ms. Barbara Rusmore, Montana Food System Council, Helena, Montana
Hon. Christine Kaufmann, State Legislator, SD 41, Helena, Montana
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Ms. Genevieve de Alva King, Executive Director, Sustainable Business Council, Missoula, Montana
Ms. Jamie Silberberger, Campaign Manager, Women's Voices for the Earth, Missoula, Montana
Mr. Mark Vander Meer, Vander Meer's Wildland Conservation Services, Missoula, Montana
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Mr. Matthew Hisel, Home Resource, Missoula, Montana
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Hon. Dick Barrett, State Legislator, HD 93, Missoula, Montana
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Mr. Drew Harris, NJ Public Health Institute, New Jersey
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Mr. Col Owens, Legal Aid of Southwest Ohio, Ohio
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Mr. Pat Beauchemin, Rhode Island Coalition of School Social Workers, Rhode Island
Mr. Matthew Cox, Executive Director, Rhode Island Parent Information Network, Rhode Island
Ms. Amy Black, Director, HealthRight, Rhode Island
Ms. Linda N Ward, Executive Director, Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., Rhode Island
Ms. Vivian Weisman, Executive Director, Mental Health Association of Rhode Island, Rhode Island
Ms. Cathy Ciano, Executive Director, Parent Support Network of Rhode Island, Rhode Island
Mr. Peter Asen, Executive Director, Ocean State Action, Rhode Island
Ms. Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director, RI KIDS COUNT, Rhode Island
Ms. Amy Black, Director, HealthRight, Rhode Island
Ms. Linda N Ward, Executive Director, Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., Rhode Island
Ms. Vivian Weisman, Executive Director, Mental Health Association of Rhode Island, Rhode Island
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Mr. Peter Asen, Executive Director, Ocean State Action, Rhode Island
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Ms. Kate Brewster, Executive Director, The Poverty Institute, Rhode Island
Ms. Elizabeth Earls, Executive Director, Rhode Island Council of Community Mental Health Organizations, Rhode Island
Mr. Chris Gadbois, Chair, Rhode Island Development Disabilities Nurses Association, Rhode Island
Ms. Donna Policastro, Executive Director, Rhode Island State Nurses Association, Rhode Island
Mr. Steve DeToy, Director, Government and Public Affairs, The Rhode Island Medical Society, Rhode Island
Mr. Ed Quinlan, Executive Director, The Hospital Association of Rhode Island, Rhode Island
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Mr. Ted Almon, President, CEO, Clafin Company, Rhode Island
Rabbi Peter Stein, President, Rhode Island Board of Rabbis, Rhode Island
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Hon. Rhoda Perry, Chair, Health, Education and Welfare Committee, Rhode Island Senate, Rhode Island
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Mr. Andrew Tripp, Organizer, United Professions of Vermont/AFT, Burlington, Vermont
Ms. Julie B Pierson, St. Paul's Cathedral, Burlington, Vermont
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Mr. Robby Stern, President, Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans, Seattle, Washington
Ms. Louise Chernin, President, Greater Seattle Business Association, Seattle, Washington
Ms. Rachel Berkson, Executive Director, SEIU WA State Council, Seattle, Washington
Ms. Janet Varon, Executive Director, Northwest Health Law Advocates, Seattle, Washington
Dr. Julian C Perez, MD, Sea Mar Community Health Centers*, Seattle, Washington
Ms. Alice M Woldt, Executive Director, Washington Association of Churches, Seattle, Washington
Mr. John M Denoooyer, Proprietor, Mega Dutch Web Design*, Seattle, Washington
Mr. J. Allen Hobart, President, Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28*, Tukwila, Washington
Ms. Kate A Hunter, Chairwoman, Vashon Islanders for Peace, Vashon Island, Washington
Ms. Teresa Mosqueda, Advocacy and Legislative Relations, Children's Alliance, Washington
Ms. Beverly Spears, Director, Statewide Poverty Action Network, Washington
Mr. Tony Lee, Director, Solid Ground, Washington
LeeAnn Hall, Executive Director, Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
Ms. Sandra Schroeder, President, AFT Washington
Community Organizations in Action, Washington
Citizen Action of Wisconsin

West Virginia
Mr. Perry K Bryant, Executive Director, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, Charleston,
West Virginia
West Virginia Citizen Action Group

Wisconsin
Maynard Beemer, ESTHER President, ESTHER of WISDOM/Gamaliel, Appleton, Wisconsin
Lynn Breedlove, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin
Mr. Billy Feitlinger, Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans, Madison, Wisconsin
Rev. Rob and Wendy MacDougall, Pastor, Menomonie, Wisconsin
Mr. Tom Frazier, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Dr. Robert A Kraig, Executive Director, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Rev. Rolf Morck, Pastor, Central Lutheran Church*, Mondovi, Wisconsin