

## **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,  
Rabbi 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 Garnder, 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  
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Dr. Robert Crittenden, Executive Director, Herndon Alliance  
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Ms. Heather Stone, Change That Works  
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Mr. William Arnold, Executive Director, Community Access National Network

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**Arkansas**

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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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Bishop Jorge Rodriguez-Villa, Protophierarch, Ecumenical Canonical Orthodox Church Worldwide, Huntington Beach, California

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Mr. Phil Bailey, Maine Change That Works, Maine  
Ms. Jill Saxby, Executive Director, Maine Council of Churches, Maine  
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Ms. Kim Moody, Executive Director, Disability Rights Center, Maine  
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 Ms. Amy Black, Director, HealthRight, Rhode Island  
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Rev. David J Larcombe, Christ Church\*, Montpelier, Vermont  
Mr. Peter Sterling, Executive Director, Vermont Campaign for Health Care Security, Montpelier, Vermont  
Ms. Sheila E. Reed, Legislative and Community Advocacy Coordinator, Voices for Vermont's Children, Montpelier, Vermont  
Mr. Brian Prendergast, Vermont Interfaith Action-PICO, Montpelier, Vermont  
Ms. Liz Burroughs, State Coordinator, Virginia Main Street Alliance\*, Richmond, Vermont  
Ms. Katherine Van Woert, Vermont Family Network/ Family Voices of Vermont, Shelburne, Vermont

## **Virginia**

Ms. Jennifer D Lawson, Executive Director, Virginia Civic Engagement Table\*, Alexandria, Virginia  
Dr. Kathleen Clanon, Coalition Co-Chair, Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition, Arlington, Virginia  
Andrea Weddle Executive Director, HIV Medicine Association, Arlington, Virginia  
Ms. Andrea Weddle, Executive Director, HIV Medicine Association, Arlington, Virginia  
Rev. Dr. Jerrold L Foltz, Pastor Emeritus, United Church of Christ\*, Centreville, Virginia  
Ms. Janice "Jay" Johnson, Chairperson, Virginia Organizing Project, Charlottesville, Virginia

Rev. Rodney M Hunter, Pastor, Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia  
Dr. Leela p Kriplani, MD,MPH, Virginia Interfaith Center, Richmond, Virginia  
Mrs. Jill A. Hanken, Staff Attorney, Virginia Poverty Law Center, Richmond, Virginia  
Mr. Michael Cassidy, Executive Director, The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, The  
Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, Richmond, Virginia  
Change that Works Virginia

### **Washington**

Pastor James David Patten, Pastor, Pastor Newport Presbyterian Church\*, Bellevue, Washington  
Ms. Monica L Peabody, Executive Director, Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights,  
Olympia, Washington  
Ms. Kim Cook, President, SEIU Local 925\*, Seattle, Washington  
Mr. Will Pittz, Executive Director, Washington Community Action Network\*, Seattle, Washington  
Mr. Will H. Parry, Member, Executive Board, Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans, Seattle,  
Washington  
Ms. Edyth C. Koch, Treasurer, Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans\*, Seattle, Washington  
Ms. Blishda E Lacet, Program Director, Seattle & King County REACH Coalition\*, Seattle,  
Washington  
Mr. Tony Lee, Advocacy Director, Solid Ground, Seattle, Washington  
Dr. Allan I Michaels, Communications, Seattle Jewish Seniors, Seattle, Washington  
Mr. Rodolfo Franco, President, WFSE Local 304, Seattle, Washington  
Mr. Newton L. Simmons, Manager, Simmons Consulting\*, Seattle, Washington  
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 Denooyer, 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