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Press Release

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New Poll Shows Mainers Only Support Insurance Mandate If Given Choice of Public Health Insurance Option

A new poll of 400 likely Maine voters shows overwhelming support for President Obama's health care reform proposal. Asked specifically if they supported giving everyone the choice of a public health insurance option, 58% of Maine voters said they were in favor, with only 35% opposed.

The poll, released by Health Care for America Now and the Maine People's Alliance, also shows that only 35% of Mainers support the idea of a mandate requiring all Americans to purchase private health insurance. However, if the choice of a public health insurance option is offered alongside the mandate, public opinion shifts dramatically, with 55% of Mainers supporting the measure.

Maine People's Alliance Executive Director Jesse Graham says that these results show Maine people don't want their members of Congress to force them to buy health insurance without giving them an alternative to the private health insurance industry.

"Maine people know the health insurance system in this country is broken, and they know what needs to be done to fix it," said Graham. "Legislation that doesn't establish a strong, immediate public health insurance option isn't true reform and won't achieve the goals of lowering costs and keeping the insurance companies honest. Providing the choice of a public health insurance option is the only way that Mainers will accept being mandated to purchase health insurance."

These results are a rebuke to the plan recently proposed by Senator Baucus (D-MT), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, which contains individual insurance mandates but not the choice of public health insurance option. Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine is a key member of the Finance Committee and is playing a leading role in current health care debate.

The poll has a margin of error of +/-4.9% and was conducted from September 14th to 16th, 2009. A Research 2000 poll conducted on the same dates and released on September 17th also found support for the choice of a public health insurance option at 58% in Maine.

Full poll results are available at www.healthcareformaine.com/poll

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Health Care for America Now - the nation's largest health care campaign - is made up of more than 1000 organizations representing more than 30 million people nationwide. President Obama and nearly 200 Members of Congress support HCAN's principles for health care reform. All across the country, HCAN supporters are organized and mobilized to stress the urgent need for health care reform in 2009, reform that finally puts health care needs before insurance company profits.