



Working Group of State Legislators for Health Reform

<http://statelegislatorsforhealthreform.com/>

To: President Obama
Director Nancy Ann DeParle
Speaker Pelosi
Majority Leader Reid
Chairman Harkin
State Democratic Congressional Delegation

Fm: State legislators for Health Care Reform

Dt: January 21, 2010

As state leaders in healthcare policy, we are all disappointed the Senate lost its filibuster proof majority. However, we are more dismayed with the lack of direction on how best to proceed in securing health care for all Americans.

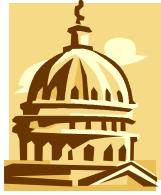
We represent over 1000 state legislators who have signed an open letter to you, administration officials and Congressional leaders, requesting a robust health care proposal.

Over the last several months, we have been working with our separate congressional delegations and have conducted hundreds of meetings with local advocacy groups, business leaders, health care providers, union members, small and large businesses, but most importantly, our citizens. The notion of any withdrawal from achieving the goal of universal health care to all Americans would be disastrous. It will adversely define your Presidency while dividing our Democratic base. It will reinforce the Republican message that we cannot deliver on our promises and most of all, it will deny Americans the health care that would improve and save lives.

We recommend a strategy that will both allow you to slow the process down but at the same time, meet all the principles you and the Democratic Congress have embraced. We would like to suggest that you take the following steps:

1. Finalize your discussion with the House and Senate on differences in their respective bills.
2. Keep the Senate passed bill on the House calendar.
3. Begin immediate deliberations in the Senate on reconciliation to resolve the differences between the House and Senate followed by an agreement to pass the Reconciliation Bill and the Senate Bill in the House.

We realize there will be negative political ramifications with any direction you decide, but the prospect of the inability to deliver a comprehensive piece of health care legislation with the added loss of our Democratic base would be a far worse outcome.



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We are outraged at the prospects of seeking re-election without a solid and comprehensive bill. And the longer you remain silent or undecided, the more our constituents view all Democrats as part of the problem during this time of great uncertainty.

We stand ready to move our separate state advocacy groups into action. We are ready to speak loudly on the benefits of a comprehensive strategy. We are ready to support you and all our Democratic members in an unprecedented show of support. But we need a strong strategy and strong leadership.

Mr. President and Congressional leaders, our faith in you, our firm commitment to comprehensive health care reform, and our resources are ready to help you.

Sincerely,

Jack Hatch, State Senator – Iowa
Sharon Treat, State Representative – Maine
Karen Keiser, State Senator – Washington
Kyrsten Sinema, State Representative – Arizona
Dede Feldman, State Senator – New Mexico
Tom Huntley, State Representative – Minnesota

The Working Group of State Legislators for Health Reform is comprised of:

Sen. Bettye Davis (AK), Sen. Joyce Elliot (AR), Rep. Kathy Webb (AR), Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (AZ), Rep. Chris Donovan (CT), Rep. Elizabeth Ritter (CT), Sen. Nan Orrock (GA), Sen. Valencia Seay (GA), Sen. Robert Brown (GA), Sen. Gloria Butler (GA), Rep. Pat Gardner (GA), Rep. Gloria Frazier (GA), Sen. Vincent Fort (GA), Sen. Emanuel Jones (GA), Sen. Matt Rector (Guam), Rep. Roy Takumi (HI), Sen. Jack Hatch (IA), Sen. Joe Bolkcom (IA), Rep. Mark Smith (IA), Rep. Susana Mendoza (IL), Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (IL), Rep. Elizabeth Coulson (IL), Rep. Barbara Ballard (KS), Rep. Louis Ruiz (KS), Rep. Karen Carter Peterson (LA), Sen. Richard Moore (MA), Rep. Steve D'Amico (MA), Del. Ana Sol Gutierrez (MD), Del. Heather Mizeur (MD), Del. Roger Manno (MD), Del. Tom Hucker (MD), Del. Dan Morhaim (MD), Speaker Hannah Pingree (ME), Rep. Sharon Treat (ME), Rep. Jim Campbell (ME), Rep. Thomas Huntley (MN), Rep. Margaret Anderson Keliher (MN), Rep. Erin Murphy (MN), Sen. Linda Berglin (MN), Sen. Kathy Sheran (MN), Rep. Jonathan Windyboy (MT), Rep. Diane Sands (MT), Rep. Verla Insko (NC), Rep. Pricey Harrison (NC), Sen. Steve Goss (NC), Sen. Sylvia Larsen (NH), Rep. Cindy Rosenwald (NH), Asm. Herb Conaway (NJ), Sen. Dede Feldman (NM), Sen. Maggie Carlton (NV), Asm. Richard Gottfried (NY), Asm. Felix Ortiz (NY), Rep. Michael Skindell (OH), Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (OR), Rep. Josh Shapiro (PA), Rep. Rosita Youngblood (PA), Keith McCall (PA), Rep. Todd Eachus (PA), Sen. Luz Arce Ferrer (PR), Rep. Amy Rice (RI), Rep. Anton Gunn (SC), Rep. Joe Armstrong (TN), Rep. Garnet F. Coleman (TX), Sen. Leticia Van De Putte (TX), Rep. Suzy Wizowaty (VT), Sen. Karen Keiser (WA), Rep. Eileen Cody (WA), Rep. Bob Hasegawa (WA), Rep. Brendan Williams (WA), Rep. Steve Conway (WA), Sen. Jon Erpenbach (WI)