



March 15, 2010

The Honorable Gerald Connolly  
U.S. House of Representatives  
327 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Connolly,

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Democratic Business Council, we urge you in the strongest manner possible, to support President Obama's Federal health care initiative when it comes to a vote this week or next. Our organization comprises members from the business community in Northern Virginia who support progressive business principles. Several of our members are steeped in health care policy, represent health care providers, and/or have worked in the area for many years and all of our members care deeply about this issue and its impact on our businesses, our state and our nation.

We recognize that there may be parts of the Senate bill with which you do not agree and are reticent to vote for in its current form, and trust the process of reconciliation to address what you consider to be its weaknesses. However, the Senate bill, even without the improvements that we anticipate will be worked out in the reconciliation process, is a vast improvement over the status quo. Among other things, it will bring affordable health insurance to more than 30 million of our citizens, eliminate a number of abusive practices in the insurance industry such as discrimination based on pre-existing conditions, provide individuals and small businesses with the purchasing power of larger companies through an insurance exchange, and protect those who have insurance from the risk of losing reasonable coverage through unemployment or starting a small business or individual proprietorship.

Also, as the recent threatened increase in prices of individual insurance has clearly demonstrated, even those who have health care insurance risk that it will become increasingly expensive, and even cost prohibitive, each year in which we delay. We strongly believe that failure to act now almost certainly will doom meaningful reform for another generation; all of this as the cost of insurance places in jeopardy the economic viability of our small businesses and our competitive position in the international marketplace.

We also understand that several of you may be concerned that the reconciliation process will not permit changes that you feel would improve the bill. While we are sympathetic, we strongly believe that it is better to pass the bill on the table, make the changes that can be enacted now in reconciliation, and fix "what might be broken," later. The alternative of doing nothing simply is not responsible public policy. Some feel that if the comprehensive bill fails, incremental changes can ameliorate the problems until Congress is willing to again tackle the issue on a large scale basis. We know better! In order to address both the cost pressures and most adverse insurance practices, we need as close to universal coverage as is feasible. In that manner, you can spread the costs over a larger population and also work on bending the cost curve.

Some argue that a younger, healthy population should not be required to subsidize an older, sicker population. Unfortunately, if you allow people to wait until they are sick to purchase insurance, the cost of doing so is prohibitive. Rather, younger healthy individuals join the pool now so that others will subsidize their care later when they need to take advantage of their coverage. These are the principals of insurance, and incremental change simply will not work.

Finally, we recognize that some of you may face criticism from your constituents who are being barraged with half truths and falsehoods about the initiative. However, we believe that it is a moral responsibility to bring health care coverage to 30 million people and to pass this bill now.

For these reasons, we cannot urge you strongly enough to recognize that the Senate bill, alone, is a vast improvement over doing nothing, and that voting for the Senate bill and using the reconciliation process to correct certain issues is the only viable option at this time. There will be opportunities in the future to convince your colleagues to make any changes that you feel are necessary. However, if you do not act now, we believe that we will lose a once-in-a-generation opportunity to provide meaningful health insurance reforms that will deliver positive results for millions of individuals and businesses throughout our nation.

Sincerely,



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Jim Hock  
President  
Northern Virginia Democratic Business Council

Cc: Virginia U.S. House delegation  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, U.S. House of Representatives Speaker  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, U.S. House of Representatives Majority Whip  
Board of Directors, Northern Virginia Democratic Business Council