

January 25, 2010

Dear Member of Congress:

We are communities of faith who have supported comprehensive health care reform for decades. We have also offered vocal support – and occasional constructive criticism – of the health care reform effort over the last year. We write to you at this critical juncture to urge you to complete the task at hand on behalf of the millions who are left out and left behind in our current health care system.

Opportunities to comprehensively address our broken health care system are rare. Decades of failed attempts at reform testify to the difficulty of this task, and we know that the current effort has not been easy. However, we now stand closer than ever before to historic health care reform. Turning back now could mean justice delayed for another generation and an unprecedented opportunity lost.

We know that no comprehensive health care reform bill will be perfect. (Indeed, if any piece of legislation ever fulfills our full vision, our vision is far too small.) However, we also know – as providers and consumers of services and care – that inaction at this critical moment is no way forward:

- Without reform, tens of thousands will continue to die needlessly each year for lack of access to care.
- Without reform, tens of millions will remain uninsured and without adequate access to a full range of services.
- Without reform, health costs will continue to grow much faster than wages.
- Without reform, many millions of hard-working people and their children will join the ranks of the uninsured and underinsured.
- Without reform, businesses, staggered by increasing employee health costs, will either drop coverage or will be unable to make needed investments.
- Without reform, the nation's economy – and its ability to create jobs – will suffer.

As people of faith, we envision a society where every person is afforded health, wholeness and human dignity. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday we just commemorated, famously wrote in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail” that “justice too long delayed is justice denied.” Less well known is his admonition that “of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

Let us not delay health care justice any longer. This is your moment for political courage, vision, leadership and faith. We urge you to take heart and move meaningful health care reform forward.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
 American Association of Pastoral Counselors
 American Baptist Churches, USA
 American Friends Service Committee
 American Muslim Health Professionals
 Buddhist Peace Fellowship
 Church Women United
 Community of Christ Ecumenical Ministries
 Daughters of Mary and Joseph
 Disciples Justice Action Network
 The Episcopal Church
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Faithful America
 Faithful Reform in Health Care
 Islamic Medical Association of North America
 Jewish Women International
 Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
 National Council of Churches of Christ USA
 National Episcopal Health Ministries
 National Ministries, American Baptist Churches, USA
 NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
 Progressive National Baptist Convention
 RESULTS Faith in Action Project
 Sojourners
 The National Advocacy Center, Sisters of the Good Shepherd
 United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
 United Methodist Church, General Board of Church in Society

State/Regional Organizations:

Arizona Ecumenical Council
 Arkansas Interfaith Alliance
 California Council of Churches
 Colorado Council of Churches
 Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
 Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
 Florida-Bahamas Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Florida Council of Churches
 Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care Faith Caucus
 Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care of Connecticut
 Justice & Witness Commission of the Kansas/Oklahoma Conference of the United
 Church of Christ
 Kentucky Council of Churches
 Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - Colorado
 Lutheran Advocacy – Illinois

Coordinated by the Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC) Health Care Working Group and

Faithful Reform in Health Care

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Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Oregon
Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin
Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey
Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California
Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network
Missouri Health Care for All
Missouri Jobs with Justice
New Mexico Conference of Churches
North Carolina Council of Churches
Parish Nurse Ministries of New York, Inc.
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Washington Association of Churches
Wisconsin Council of Churches