

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
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
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
Friends Committee on National Legislation
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
PICO National Network
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
Union of Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

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
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry – New Mexico
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Oregon
Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota
Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin
Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey
Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California
Lutheran Office on Public Policy in Maryland
Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network
Missouri Health Care for All
Missouri IMPACT
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