

Health Rights Organizing Project

July 28, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus:

Thank you for all of your efforts to achieve the critical reforms needed in health care. We know it is an enormous undertaking and appreciate the intensity of what you have before you. As you and your colleagues craft the long needed reform of our health care system, our organizations believe strongly that these reforms should be as inclusive as possible.

As you near completion on a health reform bill in the Finance Committee, we urge you to treat legal immigrants the same as you treat everyone else by removing all waiting periods in public health insurance programs for all legal immigrants, including them equitably in the subsidy structure and ensuring affordable health care for all children.

We share your goal of expanding the number of individuals who have affordable health insurance and reducing the number of uninsured in America. This means we must ensure lawfully present residents have equal access to subsidies and low income immigrants are not excluded from Medicaid because of the five year waiting period. The current waiting period in Medicaid is particularly unfair because the immigrants subject to the waiting period pay the exact same taxes as citizens. Earlier this year, thanks in no small part to your leadership, Congress eliminated the 5-year waiting period that prevented legal immigrant children from having affordable health care in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). We urge you to take the next steps in restoring fairness by mandating the inclusion of legal immigrants, including children and adults, so that Medicaid is available to all legal immigrants on the same basis as citizens. This is an issue of fundamental fairness, and voters across the political spectrum strongly support allowing legal immigrants to use the programs their taxes pay for.

We also urge you to make all immigrant children and pregnant women, without regard to their immigration status, eligible for Medicaid on the same basis as citizens. This is not only the right thing to do, it will save money over time by ensuring these residents have access to preventive care and rely less on expensive emergency room care. Universal coverage should include our most vulnerable.

All Americans deserve health care they can afford. We simply cannot afford half-measures and unfair exclusions in health reform that leave out millions of Americans.

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The following organizations urge you to take these actions to ensure we are achieving truly responsible health reform that does no harm.

Sincerely,

Regional/National

Community Catalyst
Northeast Action
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
Campaign for Community Change
Gamaliel Foundation
Fair Immigration Reform Movement
Service Employees International Union
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Council of La Raza
National Health Law Program
One America
Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamérica (COFEM)
Coalition on Human Needs
ACORN
American Academy of Nursing
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Federation of Government Employees Local 3937, AFL-CIO
American Psychological Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of the Clinicians for the Underserved
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Center for Reproductive Rights
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Health Fund
Coalition for Asian American Children & Families
Community Action Partnership

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Council on Social Work Education
Families USA
First Focus
Friends Committee on National Legislation
General Commission on Religion and Race, The United Methodist Church
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
HIV Medicine Association
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
Japanese American Citizens League
Laotian American National Alliance
La Union
League of United Latin American Citizens
Little Sisters of the Assumption U.S.A. Province
Main Street Alliance
Maternity Care Coalition
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliances of Vietnamese American Service Agencies
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Employment Law Project
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Latino Behavioral Health Association

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National Network for Arab American Communities
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice
Lobby
Out of Many, One
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Polonians Organized to Minister to Our
Community, Inc
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We
Need
RESULTS
RESULTS Education Fund
South Asian Americans Leading Together
United Neighborhood Centers of America
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness
Ministries
U. S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Voices for America's Children
Western Center on Law & Poverty
American College of Obstetricians and
Gynecologists
American Civil Liberties Union
9to5, National Association of Working Women

Alabama

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice

Arizona

Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families
LULAC Council 754 and
Reform Immigration FOR America Campaign
The Christian Alliance

California

California Partnership

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los
Angeles (CHIRLA)
Coastal Alliance for a United Sustainable Economy
(CAUSE)
Justice Overcoming Boundaries in San Diego (JOB)
Korean Resource Center (KRC)
Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern
California
Asian Women's Shelter
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
California Primary Care Association
Human Agenda
International Institute of the Bay Area Having Our
Say
Korean American Family Service Center
National Council of Jewish Women, California
North East Medical Services
School of the Americas Watch, Chapter L.A.
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network
Visión y Compromiso
9to5 Bay Area
Los Angeles 9to5

Colorado

Colorado Progressive Coalition
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Progressive Action
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and
Reproductive Rights
The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
9to5 Colorado

Connecticut

Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Citizens for Quality Sickle Cell Care, Inc.
Greater Hartford Legal Aid
New Haven Legal Assistance Association
People of Faith

Florida

Florida Immigrant Coalition

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Catholic Charities Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami
Children's Services Council of Broward County
Farmworker Association of Florida
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center
Hispanic Coalition, Inc
Pax Christ Northeast Florida
Social Justice Ministry of Cathedral Basilica of St Augustine

Georgia

Atlantans Building Leadership for Empowerment (ABLE)
Cobb Immigrant Alliance
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc.
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
OCA Georgia Chapter
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective
Atlanta 9to5

Hawaii

Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE)
Domestic Violence Action Center
Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services

Idaho

Idaho Community Action network

Illinois

Gamaliel Metro Chicago
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center (KRCC)
Pilsen Neighbors Community Council
South Suburban Action Conference
AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Indiana

Immigrant Task Force
Middle Way House, Inc

Iowa

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Quad City Interfaith

Kansas

Westside Community Action Network Center

Kentucky

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Central Leadership

Maine

Maine Peoples Alliance
Maine Center for Economic Policy

Maryland

Casa de Maryland
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice
MassVOTE
Service Employees International Union
Massachusetts State Council U.F.C.W. Local 1445
Health Care for All
Alliance to Develop Power (ADP)
Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc
Greater Boston United for Justice with Peace Coalition
Lowell Community Health Center
Ibis Reproductive Health
Massachusetts Citizens for Children
Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program
South Cove Community Health Center
The Disparities Solutions Center at Massachusetts General Hospital
Irish Immigration Center

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Michigan

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Arab Community Center for Economic & Social
Services (ACCESS)

Minnesota

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Catholic Charities' Office for Social Justice
Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs
Pax Christi Northwest Minnesota

Missouri

Metro Organization for Racial and Economic
Equity (MORE2)
Metropolitan Congregations United
Adorers of the Blood of Christ
Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice
George M Melby, Pastor
Institute for Peace & Justice
Intercommunity Housing Association
Bengal Enterprises, LLC
Parenting Life Skills Center

Montana

Montanans for Health Care

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public
Interest
Lutheran Metro Ministry, Omaha

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Citizen's

New Jersey

National Council of Jewish Women, New Jersey
State Public Affairs Committee
New Jersey Immigration Policy Network
Results, Central New Jersey Domestic Group
St. Anthony's Social Justice Group, St. Anthony of
Padua Church

Student Government Association, Raritan Valley
Community College

New York

Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse
(ACTS)
VOICE- Buffalo
Citizen Action of New York
Make the Road New York
Building Movement Project
Center for Independence of the Disabled
Commission on the Public's Health System
Community Healthcare Network
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project
Community Journal Legal Defense & Education
Fund
Empire Justice Center
Foundation for Religion and Mental Health
Global Justice Ministry
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Hispanics United of Buffalo
Korean Community Services Metropolitan New
York, Inc.
La Fuente: NYCPP and LICPP
Latino Commission on AIDS
Metropolitan Community Churches
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, Inc
North Fork Spanish Apostolate
Office of Justice and Peace, Sisters of Charity of
New York
Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to
Reach Greater Equity)
RACCOON, Inc
Reproductive Health Access Project
Society of Jesus, New York Province
South Asian Council for Social Services
Western New York Health Care Campaign

Nevada

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

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North Carolina

C.A.R.E.
Latin American Coalition
Western Carolina Community Action

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Citizens Alliance

New Mexico

New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty

Ohio

Asian Services In Action, Inc.
Justice and Witness Ministries
Ohio Empowerment Coalition

Oregon

CAUSA, Oregon's Immigrant Rights
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)
Bend-Condega Friendship Project
The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organizati

Pennsylvania

HIAS and Council Migration Service
Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Rhode Island

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Ocean State Action

South Carolina

South Carolina Fair Share

South Dakota

South Dakota for Health Care Solutions

Tennessee

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
ETSU Language and Culture Resource Center

Texas

Healthcare for All Texas-Austin

Vermont

Vermont Public Interest Research Group
Vermont Public Interest Group

Virginia

Tenants and Workers United
Virginia Organizing Project
New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center

Washington

Washington Community Action Network
Lutheran Public Policy Office
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights
Statewide Poverty Action Network
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21
WA Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

Washington, D.C.

National Capital Immigrant Coalition
The Women's Collective

Wisconsin

Voces de la Frontera
9to5 Milwaukee