



An open letter
to members of the
U.S. Senate:

Pass **REAL** Health Care Reform

October, 2009

Dear Senators:

Not since the Truman administration has our country been as close as we are today to comprehensive health reform that would control costs, guarantee coverage for all, and assure improved quality of care.

But we aren't there yet.

The Senate Finance Committee struggled for months to produce a health care bill, but it is deeply flawed.

Fortunately, there are cures for what ails the Senate Finance Committee bill:

AFFORDABILITY: The bill falls short on affordability. Working families should not be asked to spend money they simply do not have. Penalties for those who do not obtain coverage only add insult to injury.

A PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE OPTION: 68 percent of Americans agree that we need a robust, public option in order to provide real competition in the health insurance market, significantly lower costs, and hold insurance companies accountable.

DON'T TAX HEALTH PLANS: Taxing 50 percent of family health care plans is not the way to finance health care reform. Don't cut benefits and discriminate against workers whose health insurance plans have high costs for reasons that have nothing to do with wasteful or unnecessary care. Progressive alternatives, such as President Obama's plan to limit itemized deductions for top income brackets, should be implemented.

REAL EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY: Require all but the smallest employers to either provide health coverage for their employees or contribute a meaningful sum to a fund to help pay for subsidies. Otherwise, more health care costs will be borne by families and government.

The labor movement believes reforming our health care system is an economic and moral imperative. Now is the time to reach our common goal of providing quality, affordable health care for everyone. Our nation expects and deserves nothing less.

Unless the bill that goes to the floor of the U.S. Senate makes substantial progress to address the concerns of working men and women, we will oppose it.