



Congressional Black Caucus

OF THE 111TH UNITED STATES CONGRESS

2444 RAYBURN HOB • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515 •
TEL (202) 226.9776 • FAX (202) 225-9817
www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

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Change Course, Confront Crises, Continue the Legacy

Thursday, July 23rd 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In recent days, some within the Democratic Caucus have raised spurious claims that the cost of reforming health care in America is something our nation cannot afford. If we fail to act now, we do so at the peril of the American people – especially the 46 million who are currently living without health care coverage and those who are not only more likely to suffer from poorer health, but also from the economic consequences of absorbing health care costs that far exceed their budgets. Thus, we must act and we must – per your request– act quickly, yet thoughtfully because the quality of life of millions of Americans and the health of our economy hang in the balance.

We are very concerned about the current negotiations and feel that it is necessary to restate our strong position on several issues and provisions going forward.

In addition to ensuring that a strong public option remains intact, we also strongly support the following:

1. We must continue to work within the timeline to which we already agreed.
2. The Tri Com bill is budget neutral and we are concerned that efforts to cut more costs would mean cutting the vital services, like prevention and comparative effectiveness or disproportionate share.
3. A previous letter also signed by the CHC and CAPAC included requests for health disparity provisions included in specific titles in H.R. 3090 to be included in the bill and we stand firmly behind that request.
4. The children's health, prevention services and mental health and substance abuse provisions we also consider to be critical provisions in the bill and should not be compromised.



5. Our hospitals depend on DSH payments and should not be cut in search of pay-fors that are not needed.

6. Whether CBO agrees to score or not, we know that savings will come from many of the provisions of the bill. We strongly recommend a trigger that would allow these savings once realized be used to replace current pay-fors and/or add important services not now accepted because of our failure to fully score the bill.

We thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you on these issues.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Barbara Lee in cursive script.

Congresswoman Barbara Lee
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

Handwritten signature of Donna M. Christensen in cursive script.

Congresswoman Donna M. Christensen
Co-Chair, CBC Health and Wellness Task Force

Handwritten signature of Danny K. Davis in cursive script.

Congressman Danny K. Davis
Co-Chair, CBC Health and Wellness Task Force