



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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February 24, 2010

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), we strongly urge the congressional leaders from both parties meeting on February 25, 2010 to commit themselves to enacting genuine health care reform that will protect the life, dignity, consciences and health of all. It is time to set aside partisan divisions and special interest pressures to find ways to enact genuine reform. We encourage the Administration and Congress to work in a bipartisan manner marked by political courage, vision and leadership.

The Catholic bishops have long supported adequate and affordable health care for all, because health care is a basic human right. As pastors and teachers, we believe genuine health care reform must protect human life and dignity from conception to natural death, not threaten them, especially for the voiceless and vulnerable. We believe health care legislation must respect the consciences of providers, taxpayers, purchasers of insurance and others, not violate them. We believe universal coverage should be truly universal and should not be denied to those in need because of their condition, age, where they come from or when they arrive here. Providing affordable and accessible health care that clearly reflects these fundamental principles is a public good, moral imperative and urgent national priority.

The U.S. Catholic bishops continue to urge the House and Senate to adopt legislation that:

- Ensures access to quality, affordable, life-giving health care for all;
- Retains longstanding requirements that federal funds not be used for elective abortions or plans that include them, and effectively protects conscience rights; and,
- Protects the access to health care that immigrants currently have and removes current barriers to access.

For details on the bishops' positions on health care, please visit www.usccb.org/healthcare.

We will continue to work vigorously to advance true health care reform that ensures affordability and access, keeps longstanding prohibitions on abortion funding, upholds conscience rights, and addresses the health needs of immigrants. Dialogue should continue and no legislation should be finalized until and unless these basic moral criteria are met. Without commenting on specific proposals that may be brought to the summit, we will work to ensure that legislation meets these criteria and will oppose legislation that does not meet them. We hope and pray that the Congress and the country will come together around genuine health care reform that protects the life, dignity, consciences and health of all.

Sincerely,

Bishop William F. Murphy
Diocese of Rockville Centre
Chairman
Committee on Domestic Justice
and Human Development

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
Chairman
Committee on Pro-life Activities

Bishop John Wester
Diocese of Salt Lake City
Chairman
Committee on Migration

cc: United States Senate