Religious Leaders Call for Political Courage, Vision, Leadership, and Faith in Health Care Reform

February 24, 2010

Dear Mr. President and Members of Congress:

We are communities of faith who have supported comprehensive health care reform for decades. We also have 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., 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 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.

“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.”

National Organizations

- Adorers of the Blood of Christ
- African Methodist Episcopal Church
- American Association of Pastoral Counselors
- American Baptist Churches, USA
- American Friends Service Committee
- American Mikulicz Health Professionals
- Apostolic Church
- Association of Professional Chaplains
- The Beatitudes Society
- The Blue Mountain Lotus Society (Buddhist)
- Buddhist Peace Fellowship
- Captains for the Common Good
- Church Women United
- Committee of Ecumenical Ministries
- Daughters of Mary and Joseph
- Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church
- Disciples of Christ
- The Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Evangelicals for Social Action
- Faithful America
- Fairness Reform in Health Care
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Faithful Reform in Health Care
- Interfaith Worker Justice
- Islamic Medical Association
- Islamic Society of North America
- Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
- Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
- Jewish Women International
- Maryland Sisters of Mercy
- Minnesota Conference U.S.C.H.
- Mennonite Church USA
- Mercy Associates
- National Catholic Sisters Conference
- National Catholic Social Justice Ministry
- National Black Church Initiative
- National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
- National Episcopal Health Ministries
- National Minorities, American Baptist Churches, USA
- NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
- PICO National Network
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Progressive Christian Alliance
- Progressive National Baptist Convention
- Sisters of Mercy
- Sisters of St. Joseph
- Sisters of Notre Dame
- Sisters of St. Joseph Third Order of St. Francis Leadership Team
- Sisters of the Holy Names
- Sojourners
- The National Advocacy Center, Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- The Universal Anglican Church
- United Church of Christ
- United Church of Christ, United Black Churches
- United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
- United Pentecostal Association
- Unitarian Universalist Association
- Congregations
- UUSisters
- World Without Borders

Regional/State Organizations:
- Alliance for Health Care Reform, Washington
- American Baptist Churches, USA
- American Association of Pastoral Counselors
- American Methodist Episcopal Church
- American Public Health Association
- American Baptist Churches, USA
- American Council on Patient Care
- American Friends Service Committee
- American Mikulicz Health Professionals
- American Muslim Health Professionals
- Apostolic Church
- Association of Professional Chaplains
- The Beatitudes Society
- The Blue Mountain Lotus Society (Buddhist)
- Buddhist Peace Fellowship
- Captains for the Common Good
- Church Women United
- Committee of Ecumenical Ministries
- Daughters of Mary and Joseph
- Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church
- Disciples of Christ
- The Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Evangelicals for Social Action
- Fairness Reform in Health Care
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Fairness Reform in Health Care
- Interfaith Worker Justice
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This letter was sponsored by the Health Care Working Group of the Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC) and Faithful Reform in Health Care. In addition to the names and organizations listed above, over 4,000 members of faith communities from all 50 states have signed it. The letter and all signatures may be viewed at http://www.fairhealth.org.