

Tools and Tactics: Sample Letters to the Editor

Please feel free to adapt these letters, sign them, and submit them to your local paper. Letters to the editor are one very effective way to raise public awareness about the need for health reform.

It's Time

Right now, more families than ever before are struggling with high health care costs. There are many examples of this troubling trend: Health care premiums get more expensive every year – over the last 10 years, premiums rose five times faster than wages. Not only are hard-working Americans paying higher premiums, they're also paying higher deductibles and copayments, and they're getting health insurance that covers fewer and fewer benefits. As health care costs skyrocket, Americans are forced to dig into their savings to pay their medical bills. Even worse, there are more stories each day of people who are filing for bankruptcy because of medical costs--and many of them have insurance

It's time for Congress to fix America's health care system. Under the proposals currently being considered in Congress, Americans can keep what they have if they like it, including their doctors and their health plan. For others without insurance, health reform will give them affordable options. That's a goal we should all be able to agree on. It's time to stop playing politics and solve the health care crisis. It's time for Americans to stop paying more and getting less.

Peace of Mind

Each day, more and more working Americans are struggling with unaffordable health care costs. Many small businesses are unable to offer their employees health coverage due to the high cost. This leaves employees to fend for themselves and try to purchase health insurance on their own in the private market, where it can be hard to find coverage. Even when people are able to find health coverage, it is often expensive and may not cover all the health care services they need to stay healthy.

In our current "system," insurance companies can deny people coverage if they have a pre-existing condition, or if they were sick in the past, or even based on just their age. This leaves people without coverage, worrying about what will happen if someone in their family gets sick or hurt. This should never happen in this country. Families shouldn't have to go to bed worried about how they are going to pay for their health care and still have enough money left over to buy groceries.

Americans deserve peace of mind when it comes to their health – they deserve quality, affordable health care that they can count on. We must pass health reform this year that makes health care more affordable for our families and businesses.

Guarantee Coverage for All Americans

I support guaranteeing health care for all Americans, not only because it's a moral issue, but also because it's an economic issue. Currently, 50 million Americans have no health insurance – and these uninsured Americans are more likely to have worse health and to die sooner. And as unemployment rises, more of our neighbors will lose access to the good health care that is provided through employers. This is a crisis not just for families, but also for our economy: In 2007, the economy lost \$200 billion due to the poorer health of the uninsured.

About 60 percent of uninsured Americans are small business owners, employees, and their families. This is partly due to the fact that small companies are charged more than larger companies for health care for their employees. Our current health care system puts small businesses at a disadvantage, and that's not right.

To climb out of this recession, we need to keep everyone healthy and working together. In our current health care system, that's impossible. We need health reform so that we can guarantee that everyone has the coverage that fits their needs so we can get our economy back on track.

Fair Access to Affordable Coverage

Our health care crisis isn't just about the 50 million Americans without health insurance. More and more of us with health insurance can't afford the out-of-pocket costs we are charged for care. In fact, 62 percent of all bankruptcies filed in 2007 were due in part to medical costs, and 78 percent of the individuals filing for bankruptcy *had insurance*.

Not surprisingly, it is estimated that, seven years from now – if we don't pass health reform – at least half of American households will need to spend more than 45 percent of their income to buy health insurance.

We all deserve access to affordable health care, and the longer we have to wait for health reform, more and more of us will have to go without the health care

we need. Congress must take action to guarantee that everyone has fair access to affordable coverage.