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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Committee on Rules Statement on**  
**The Reconciliation Act of 2010 (H.R. 4872) and Senate Amendment to the Patient**  
**Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590)**  
**March 20, 2010**

Chairman Slaughter and Members of the Committee:

We are on the verge of taking a decisive step to provide access for all Americans to affordable quality health insurance.

Health insurance today is failing our families and our businesses.

If we do nothing, the system will go bankrupt, premiums will keep skyrocketing, benefits will keep getting slashed, what you get will cost much more, and our country's expenditures on health care will continue to grow unchecked.

Today, unfortunately, Americans with health insurance know that they are just one serious illness away from debt, losing their home, and bankruptcy.

With this legislation – we provide Americans security that they will always be able to afford and access health care for themselves and their families.

First and foremost, this package of measures provides health insurance security for all Americans

It builds on what works and reforms what doesn't.

You can keep your doctor, and your other health care providers.

If you lose your job, you will not lose access to health care.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition, you will not be denied health insurance or

charged more for that insurance.

Health reform provides significant benefits that will be delivered shortly after enactment, and able to be used by the American people in this calendar year. For example, seniors will see immediate help with their Medicare prescription drug costs with a \$250 rebate, insurance companies will not be able to cancel your insurance when you get sick, and parents will have the option of keeping their children up to the age of 26 on their insurance policies.

When we fully implement reform, we bring 32 million uninsured Americans into the health insurance system. This expansion is not only equitable; it enables the substantial insurance reforms that are needed to stop the abuses and discrimination currently in the insurance market.

In addition, even within the strict limits of the reconciliation rules, we have taken strong and effective action to improve the Senate bill – to make its provisions more effective, more equitable, more progressive, and more consistent with our overarching goal of ensuring affordable access to quality health insurance for all Americans.

The principal improvements we have made under our Committee's jurisdiction include:

- Closing the gap in Medicare prescription drug coverage by 2020, including a rebate this year to eligible seniors.
- Eliminating the special Medicaid deal for Nebraska, and increasing federal matching rates to all states for the costs of services to newly eligible individuals beginning in 2014.
- Improving federal Medicaid payments to states that now cover low-income childless adults so they are treated equitably.
- Increasing Medicaid payment rates for primary care physicians so that new Medicaid beneficiaries will have access to primary care.
- Greater investments into community health centers.
- Reforming Medicare Advantage, ensuring Medicare's sustainability, and strengthening Medicare services.

Health reform is not only a moral imperative, it is an economic one. It will reduce the deficit by more than a trillion dollars over the next two decades.

I look forward to the deliberations of the Rules Committee and to our approval, tomorrow, of the most important health legislation since Medicare, and the most important package of domestic legislation since Social Security in 1935.

Thank you.