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FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

... a Quaker lobby in the public interest

November 3, 2009

Representative Charles Rangel, chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Representative Pete Stark, chair
Subcommittee on Health

Representative Henry Waxman, chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Representative Frank Pallone, chair
Subcommittee on Health

Representative George Miller, chair
Committee on Education and Labor

Dear Representatives Rangel, Stark, Waxman, Pallone and Miller:

I write to congratulate you on the introduction of the Affordable Health Care for Americans Act, which the Friends Committee on National Legislation is pleased to endorse.

In early June, we wrote to your committees seeking four major elements in health insurance reform:

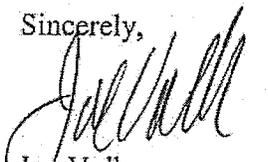
- A comprehensive public plan to improve transparency and quality in the private health insurance market, and to ensure that at least one comprehensive plan is available to everyone;
- Income-based subsidies to make health care affordable for those who do not have employer-provided insurance and do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid;
- Reforms in the private health insurance market, based on the tax-favored status of plans offered as employee benefits; and
- Oversight over standards and operation of the plans by authorities that include major stakeholders, including the public.

Your bill offers all of these major elements, and gives close attention to the successful operation of a health care system as a public good rather than an increasingly expensive profit center.

We continued to work with your staff and with many others in the House on the details of the bills as they were shaped by the three committees. The attached memorandum describes some of the highlights of the bill that have our strongest support, along with some cautions and questions that we hope your committees will continue to monitor as this bill moves through the House and eventually on to conference.

We are deeply appreciative of the talent and expertise that you and your hardworking staff invested in crafting this bill. Your efforts will help to move the United States into something close to parity with our international peers who figured out, a long time ago, the importance of assuring access to health care for all of their people.

Sincerely,



Joe Volk
Executive Secretary