the MAIN STREET alliance

A big vision for small business

November 2, 2009

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the thousands of small business owners participating in the Main Street Alliance, I want to extend our sincere thanks to you and the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives for introducing the "Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009" (H.R. 3962). Following the work of the three House committees with jurisdiction over the many aspects of health reform, this historic legislation meets the objectives of Main Street small business owners in reforming our nation's health care system: giving small employers real choices in affordable health coverage including the option of a competitive public health insurance plan. We are proud to give this bill our strong support and pledge to work with you and your colleagues to secure its prompt adoption by the full House of Representatives.

By taking crucial steps toward providing more affordable options for quality health coverage, we are confident that this legislation will help small businesses become more competitive by giving them greater control over one of the most costly and unpredictable aspects of doing business. H.R. 3962 includes a number of reforms that address the key priorities of our small business owners: promoting transparency and giving small businesses simplified choices through a robust federal Health Insurance Exchange, increasing bargaining power and driving down costs through a strong public health insurance option that will keep private insurers honest, prohibiting pre-existing condition exclusions and ending discrimination against small groups based on health status, and making coverage more affordable through a strong system of shared commitment. These elements are essential to making health care work for Main Street.

The owners and employees of small businesses believe that health care reform must be a shared responsibility of all stakeholders – individuals, businesses, providers, insurers and the government. The Main Street Alliance is pleased to see that this legislation asks all parties to play a role in improving health care. As long as affordable coverage options are available, we support giving employers the choice of either offering coverage to employees or making a contribution toward the cost of that coverage. We appreciate the inclusion of tax credits to help smaller, low-wage businesses offset the expense of providing coverage, as well as subsidies to assist low-income employees and their families to afford their contribution.

The Main Street Alliance is proud to extend its strong support for this legislation, and we look forward to working with you and other leaders in Congress and the Administration to see comprehensive health care reform enacted into law this year. This is a historic opportunity to address the nation's health care crisis, and the "Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009" is an important step in seizing that opportunity.

Sincerely,

Dave Mason

Dave Mason
Legislative and Policy Director
The Main Street Alliance