PVA
PARALYZED VETERANS
OF AMERICA

November 4, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) wishes to commend you for including critical elements important to veterans and all people with disabilities in H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009. PVA is the only Congressionally-chartered veterans' service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease.

We deeply appreciate the specific provisions stipulating that those enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health system are considered to have fulfilled their responsibility to have qualified coverage. We are also grateful that the bill will allow veterans, members of the armed forces and their families to have access to the health insurance exchanges. The House leadership listened to the concerns of the veterans' community.

PVA has always supported measures to ensure that people with disabilities have access to high quality, comprehensive, affordable health care that meets their individual needs and enables them to be healthy, functional, live as independently as possible, and participate in the community. H.R. 3962 goes a long way toward meeting that goal. Many of its provisions take important steps in improving access to quality, affordable health care for people with disabilities and chronic conditions.

The provisions in the bill that benefit people with disabilities and chronic conditions are far too many to list in this brief letter, but the following provisions will provide greater health security for people with spinal cord injuries and diseases:

- Major <u>insurance market reforms</u> such as the elimination of discrimination based on health status, a prohibition on pre-existing condition exclusions, guaranteed issue and renewal requirements, and elimination of annual and lifetime caps;

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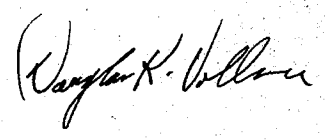
- Inclusion of critical services in the new Health Insurance Exchange's essential benefits package such as rehabilitation and habilitation services, durable medical equipment, and prosthetics, orthotics and related supplies.
- Inclusion of the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act, a new actuarially sound, premium-based, national long term services insurance program to help adults with severe functional impairments to remain independent, employed, and a part of their communities, without having to impoverish themselves to become eligible for Medicaid;
- Requirements for the development of standards for accessible diagnostic and other medical equipment.

Again, we thank you for developing a legislative package that makes major progress in meeting the needs of all Americans this year, including veterans and all people with disabilities.

Sincerely,



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