



Leo W. Gerard
International President

November 6, 2009

VIA FAX

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

Ensuring affordable and accessible health care for all Americans has been an unfulfilled promise for over 60 years and a stain on the conscience of the nation. We, as Executive Board members of the United Steelworkers (USW), write on behalf of 1.2 million active and retired USW members to express our strong support for the progressive health care reform bill released by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on October 30th. We urge you vote for this bill and to oppose any amendments that would weaken this historic piece of legislation.

As we are all too well-aware, the country's health care system is in crisis and will only deteriorate further unless and until we act to contain skyrocketing costs -- costs which are placing a greater and greater burden on working Americans, businesses and government while forcing millions of Americans to forgo health care insurance entirely. Over time, this dysfunctional system has taken its toll on our health and our competitiveness. That must change now.

We welcome the inclusion of a public plan option, which will make sure that all Americans can get coverage no matter what and which finally will force private insurance companies to compete fairly and be held to account. The bill also fairly shares the responsibility for reform by requiring employers to provide health insurance or pay a penalty for not doing so and expands coverage while successfully lowering costs and reducing the nation's deficit by \$30 billion over the next ten years. The bill would provide much-needed help to employers and others, such as VEBAS, which provide health care coverage to pre-Medicare retirees to continue doing the right thing for this vulnerable population.

The House Leadership has put forth a fiscally responsible bill that is fairly financed and which covers 96 percent of Americans. More importantly, the bill does not attempt to finance reform on the backs of the working middle class, which would be a fatal mistake, as working middle class Americans have seen their wages stagnate even during the go-go years and now face untold years of economic insecurity.

United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

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The time to fulfill the promise of real health care reform is upon us, and we urge you to be on the right side of history to turn that promise into reality.

Sincerely,

Executive Board Members
United Steelworkers

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