

January 27, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for bringing this nation so close to the goal of achieving comprehensive health care reform. At this critical juncture, we encourage you to exercise the full influence of your office to urge Congress to pass comprehensive health care reform legislation.

Your active and public leadership is desperately needed at this moment of doubt on Capitol Hill. The political twists and turns of the last week do not change the facts on the ground: hundreds of thousands of Americans will lose their homes, thousands who would otherwise live will die, and countless people will continue to go without needed care if Congress does not pass health reform.

We implore you to make it plain to all Americans that the decisions of Congress have moral consequences. Lawmakers are closer than ever before to passing this critically needed legislation. Letting this life-line lapse for so many Americans now would be a failure of historic proportions. We appreciate your declaration that you are “not going to walk away just because it’s hard.” Strong, public leadership from you at this moment could sway leaders who are now wavering and considering putting off or scaling back reform.

Too many people in our congregations and communities have waited too long for quality, affordable health care. We cannot let them down. We will keep focused on helping the vulnerable until this job is done; we will support you and all our political leaders who will finish what you have started.

We will continue to pray for you, and we thank you for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

Anju Bhargava, Founder and Convener, Hindu American Seva Charities, NJ

Sister Simone Campbell, Director, NETWORK, Washington, DC

Tony Campolo, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Eastern University, St. Davids, PA

Noel Castellanos, CEO, Christian Community Development Association, Chicago, IL

Dr. Arturo Chavez, Ph.D., President & CEO, Mexican American Cultural Center, San Antonio, TX

The Rev. Peg Chamberlin, President, National Council of Churches USA, Minneapolis, MN

Rev. Dr. George Cummings, Co-chair, PICO National Steering Committee, Oakland, CA

Rev. Andrew D. Genszler, Director of Advocacy, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington DC

Dr. David Gushee, David Gushee, Chair, New Evangelical Partnership, Atlanta, GA

Steve Gutow, President and CEO, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, New York, NY

Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Founding and Senior Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, GA

Rev. Derrick Harkins, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, Washington, DC

Pastor Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland, a Church Distributed, Longwood, FL

Harry Knox, Director, Religion and Faith Program, Human Rights Campaign, Washington, DC

Bishop Vashti M. McKenzie, Presiding Bishop, 13th Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Brian McLaren, Author/Speaker/ Founding pastor, Cedar Ridge Community Church, Spencerville, MD

Morna Murray, President, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, Washington, DC

Melissa Rogers, Director, Center for Religion and Public Affairs, Wake Forest University Divinity School, Winston-Salem, NC

Rabbi David N. Saperstein, Director & Counsel, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Washington, DC

Dr. William J. Shaw, Past President, National Baptist Convention, USA, Philadelphia, PA

Ron Sider, President, Evangelicals for Social Action, Wynnewood, PA

Jim Wallis, President and CEO, Sojourners, Washington, DC

Jim Winkler, General Secretary, United Methodist General Board of Church and Society, Washington, DC

Cc: The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives