

Dear Members of Congress:

We write to urge you to cast a life-affirming “yes” vote when the Senate health care bill (H.R. 3590) comes to the floor of the House for a vote as early as this week. We join the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), which represents 1,200 Catholic sponsors, systems, facilities and related organizations, in saying: **the time is now for health reform AND the Senate bill is a good way forward.**

As the heads of major Catholic women’s religious order in the United States, we represent 59,000 Catholic Sisters in the United States who respond to needs of people in many ways. Among our other ministries we are responsible for running many of our nation’s hospital systems as well as free clinics throughout the country.

We have witnessed firsthand the impact of our national health care crisis, particularly its impact on women, children and people who are poor. We see the toll on families who have delayed seeking care due to a lack of health insurance coverage or lack of funds with which to pay high deductibles and co-pays. We have counseled and prayed with men, women and children who have been denied health care coverage by insurance companies. We have witnessed early and avoidable deaths because of delayed medical treatment.

The health care bill that has been passed by the Senate and that will be voted on by the House will expand coverage to over 30 million uninsured Americans. While it is an imperfect measure, it is a crucial next step in realizing health care for all. It will invest in preventative care. It will bar insurers from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions. It will make crucial investments in community health centers that largely serve poor women and children. And despite false claims to the contrary, the Senate bill will not provide taxpayer funding for elective abortions. It will uphold longstanding conscience protections and it will make historic new investments – \$250 million – in support of pregnant women. This is the REAL pro-life stance, and we as Catholics are all for it.

Congress must act. We are asking every member of our community to contact their congressional representatives this week. In this Lenten time, we have launched nationwide prayer vigils for health care reform. We are praying for those who currently lack health care. We are praying for the nearly 45,000 who will lose their lives this year if Congress fails to act. We are also praying for you and your fellow Members of Congress as you complete your work in the coming days. For us, this health care reform is a faith mandate for life and dignity of all of our people.

We urge you to vote “yes” for life by **voting yes for health care reform in H.R. 3590.**

Sincerely,

Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA  
LCWR President  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Joan Chittister, OSB  
Co-Chair Global Peace Initiative of Women  
Erie, PA

Sr. Mary Persico, IHM  
President  
Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
Scranton, PA

Sr. Susan Hadzima, IHM  
Councilor for Missioning and Community Life  
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
Scranton, PA

Mary Genino (RSHM)  
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary  
Western American Province.

Nancy Conway CSJ  
Congregation Leadership Team  
The Congregation of St. Joseph

Debra M. Sciano, SSND  
Provincial Leader  
Milwaukee Province, School Sisters of Notre Dame

Josephine Gaugier, OP  
Adrian Dominican Sisters  
Holy Rosary Mission Chapter Prioress  
Adrian, MI

Kathleen Nolan, OP  
Adrian Dominican Sisters  
Office of the General Council

Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA, President  
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration  
La Crosse, WI

Corinne Weiss  
Servants of Jesus Leadership Team  
Saginaw MI

Adrian Dover OP  
Prioress  
Dominican Sisters of Houston, Texas

Rose Mary Dowling, FSM  
President  
Franciscan Sisters of Mary

Leadership Team  
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
(from Mary Martens, BVM  
Administrative Assistant)

Beatrice Haines, OLVM  
President, Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters  
Huntington IN

Joan Saalfeld, SNJM, Provincial  
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary  
U.S.-Ontario Province

Jo'Ann De Quattro, SNJM  
Sisters of the Holy Names  
U.S.-Ontario Province Leadership Team

Sharon Simon, OP  
President  
Racine Dominicans

Maryann A. McMahon, O.P.  
Vice President  
Dominican Sisters of Racine, WI

Agnes Johnson, OP  
Vice President  
Racine Dominicans

Pat Mulcahey, OP  
Prioress of Sinsinawa Dominicans

Pam Chiesa, PBVM  
President  
Sisters of the Presentation, San Francisco

Patricia Anne Cloherty, PBVM  
Leadership Team, Sisters of the Presentation, San Francisco

Gloria Inés Loya  
Leadership Team

Sisters of the Presentation, San Francisco

Gloria Marie Jones, OP  
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose  
Congregational Prioress and Council

Mary Litell  
Provincial Councilor  
Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity St. Francis Province

Theresa Sandok, OSM  
Servants of Mary (Servite Sisters)  
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Sr Claire Graham SSS  
General Director  
Sisters of Social Service  
Encino CA

Margaret Byrne CSJP - Congregation Leader  
Teresa Donohue CSJP - Assistant Congregation Leader  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace

Sr. Carmelita Latiolais, S.E.C.  
Sisters of the Eucharistic Covenant

Joan Mumaw, IHM – Vice President  
On behalf of the Leadership Council  
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
Monroe, Michigan

Sister Clare of Assisi Pierre, SSF  
Sisters of the Holy Family  
New Orleans, LA

Sister Marla Monahan, SND  
Provincial  
Sisters of Notre Dame  
(St. Claire Regional Medical Center in Morehead, KY  
and St. Charles Care Center in Covington, KY)

Vivien Linkhauer, SC  
Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, United States Province  
Greensburg, PA

Dolores Maguire

Sisters of the Holy Faith  
Northern California LCWR Region XIV

Sr. Mary Elizabeth Schweiger, OSB  
Subprioress  
Mount St. Scholastica  
Atchison, KS

Marianites of Holy Cross  
Sr. Suellen Tennyson, MSC  
Congregational Leader

Barbara Hagedorn, SC  
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati  
Mt. St. Joseph, Ohio

Francine Schwarzenberger OP  
Dominican Sisters of Peace  
Denver, Colorado

Sister Maureen McCarthy  
School Sisters of St. Francis  
U.S. Provincial Team  
Milwaukee, WI

Eileen C. Reid, RJM  
Provincial Superior  
Religious of Jesus and Mary  
Washington DC

Sister Cecilia Dwyer, O.S.B.  
Prioress  
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

The Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes  
Sister Joann Sambs, CSA  
General Superior

Sisters of St. Francis  
Tiffin, Ohio  
(from Sr. Mary Kuhlman)

Sr. Helen McDonald, SHCJ  
Province Leader  
Society of the Holy Child Jesus

Leadership Team  
Sisters of the Precious Blood  
Dayton, OH

The Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis  
Sister Jane Blabolil, SSJ-TOSF  
Sister Michelle Wronkowski, SSJ-TOSF  
Sister Dorothy Pagosa, SSJ-TOSF  
Sister Linda Szocik, SSJ-TOSF

Sr. Gladys Guenther SHF  
Sisters of the Holy Family  
Congregational President  
Fremont, CA

Sr. Dorothy Maxwell, Councilor  
Sisters of St. Dominic  
Blauvelt New York

Sheral Marshall, OSF  
Provincial Councilor  
Sisters of St Francis

Marilyn Kerber, SNDdeN  
Canonical Representative, Ohio Province

Sisters of St. Louis, California Region  
(from Sr. Michele Harnett, SSL)

Ruth Goodwin, OSF  
Sisters of ST. Francis of Philadelphia

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
Leadership Team

Sr. Joanne Buckman, OSU  
Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland