



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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June 2, 2009

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Hon. Henry Waxman, Chairman
Commerce and Energy Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Charles Rangel, Chairman
Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. George Miller, Chairman
Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen,

As President of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), AFL-CIO, I am writing regarding your ongoing work to craft comprehensive health care reform legislation. I am also writing in my capacity as the Chair of the Labor Caucus for Single Payer Health Care.

IFPTE, along with all of the unions within the Labor Caucus, continues to urge Congress to pass legislation calling for the creation of a publicly financed health care delivery system similar or identical to the already existing Medicare program. We at IFPTE applaud each of you for your past support of HR 676, which would expand Medicare to all Americans, as well as residents of U.S. territories. In the current 111th Congress HR 676 has garnered 77 cosponsors, has the backing of the US Conference of Mayors and the American College of Physicians, and has been endorsed by 535 union organizations in 49 states, including 20 international/national unions, and 39 State Federations of Labor. Single Payer healthcare legislation also has the backing of 59% of American doctors.

As you continue your work IFPTE urges that, at the very least, you include language to allow individual States to implement single payer health care systems if they so choose. That language must allow States going down this path to receive the same federal health care dollars that they otherwise would have. IFPTE asks that your legislation include the necessary ERISA waivers and exemptions to ensure that individual states will not be blocked from pursuing single payer. In California, for example, single payer legislation has passed the legislature twice, while there is similar legislation pending in 14 other States, including larger States like Pennsylvania, Illinois, Colorado, and Missouri. Needless to say, it would be highly disappointing if reform legislation passed by Congress and signed by President Obama prevented these States, and others, from pursuing single payer.

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It's important to note that in Canada guaranteed health care for all was not achieved in a single step. Instead, the Provinces achieved this individually over time. We at IFPTE believe that given the movement toward single payer at the State level, the evolution toward single payer here in the United States could be similar to that experienced in Canada. However, we must first ensure that the legislation passed by Congress does not interfere with these efforts at the State level.

We at IFPTE thank you for your efforts to craft reform legislation that addresses the health care crisis facing our nation. We are hopeful that as you work toward finalizing a bill, you will keep the views of IFPTE, and the Labor Caucus for Single Payer Health Care in mind. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or IFPTE Legislative Director, Matt Biggs, at (202) 239-4880.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Junemann
President

