

## Health Care Reform Passes the House

Written by Mike Honda  
Sunday, 21 March 2010 17:35

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Today's historic vote gives us the roadmap to reform. Americans have been vocal and consistent in their calls for changes to our health care system that will stop the abuses of insurance industries, bring down costs, increase quality and access and provide a measure of stability to their families. Without health reform, our employment-based health insurance system frequently meant that the loss of a job led to the loss of health insurance coverage and raised very real possibility of bankruptcy and financial ruin for families unfortunate enough to experience health crisis during that vulnerable time. Without health reform, small businesses and individuals would continue to face skyrocketing, unsustainable increases in the cost of their plans.

This reform effort will improve access for the people of my district, the 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and our nation as a whole.

In my district alone

, up to 86,000 families and 14,900 small businesses will receive tax credits and other assistance to help them afford coverage; 47,000 young adults will be able to obtain coverage; 18 community clinics – the safety nets of our region – will receive millions of dollars in new funding; coverage will be extended to 22,500 uninsured residents; and finally, the bill reduce the cost of uncompensated care for our hospitals and other health care providers by \$113 million annually. Although I have supported and will continue to support even more robust efforts to make deeper changes in our health care system, I believe that this is a necessary and effective response to the dire need in my district and many across the country. In passing this reconciliation bill, the House is not only acting to reform our health care system, we

are making an investment in education at the same time.

In this bill we end the privatization of federal student loans. This will save the taxpayer \$61 billion dollars over ten years

, \$13.5 billion of which will go toward paying down the national debt, and ensure that bankers aren't

making profits off the backs of people working to improve their lives and advance their education. As a staunch supporter of higher education and a believer in the need for health reform

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I  
am proud to support this legislation.

**In addition, I would also like to share my statement for the Congressional Record with you:**

Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of health care reform. The other side of the aisle would have us believe that we need to wait longer to make health reform a reality. They don't want to make the sweeping changes that the American people KNOW we need to make.

I cannot, WE cannot, stand by and let this historic opportunity pass us by; the people of my district deserve more and better from this Congress.

I say yes to tax credits and other assistance to 86,000 families and 14,900 small businesses in my district. I say yes to coverage for 22,500 uninsured residents. I say yes to protecting 800 families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs.

I say yes to reform.

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All the other side is saying is no - to reining in health costs, controlling insurance companies who have proven over and over that they are willing to put profit over people's lives, to ending the confusing morass of paperwork and lack of transparency that drives doctors, patients, and hospitals to distraction and negatively impacts the quality of patient care.

The opponents of this reform had their time – health reform was defeated in 1994 and they had a decade to change the system. People are still dying because they can't afford care. Doctors are still dealing with ever more complicated paperwork rather than healing people. Our public hospitals are reeling and the number of uninsured continues to grow.

We needed to act this weekend to step forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, make the hard choices, take the tough vote, and act in the best interests of our country. I am proud to vote in favor of health care reform.

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