

ECDC

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.

Serving the Multicultural Community Since 1983

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The Honorable Mike Honda
1713 Longworth H.O.B
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Honda:

With health care reform legislation finally moving through the reconciliation process, the question of whether the final bill will include a public option appears to be the most contentious—and most vital—issue yet to be resolved.

Absent that option, true reform will remain an unachieved goal, leaving the nation's most vulnerable population segments ill-served, or made even more vulnerable if they are required to purchase insurance from profit-motivated companies with no effective competition.

I urge you to use your vote and your influence to secure a bill that includes a public option, along with other essential elements to expand coverage, control costs and protect consumers from abusive and unfair practices.

For refugee and immigrant newcomers to the United States, the heated and divisive debate that has surrounded the reform efforts in recent months has been both baffling and disheartening. Most were drawn here by American's historic record of hospitality, civility and democratic approaches to problem solving:

They are aware of the "unalienable rights" of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness described in the Declaration of Independence and "the more perfect union" envisioned in the Constitution. They know that one of the government's responsibilities is to "promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

And they know that providing a public option will not result in a "government takeover of the health care system," as falsely charged by opponents of the option. That same "scare charge" was made by opponents of Medicare in the 1960s, a program now hailed by nearly all citizens as an essential support element for seniors.

ECDC is one of nine voluntary agencies authorized by the Department of State to resettle refugees in the United States. Established in 1983, we provide a wide range of cultural, educational and socio-economic development programs to refugees and immigrants, with a special focus on the African newcomer community.



our health insurance costs have increased by 30 percent. That type of cost escalation must stop.

True reform of the system is vital. Achieving it has never been so close. A majority of American's support a public option. I trust that you will help achieve it.

Please know how highly we value your leadership and support.

Sincerely,



Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.

President