

Health Rights Organizing Project

August 7, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus:

Thank you for all of your efforts to achieve the critical reforms needed in health care. We know it is an enormous undertaking and appreciate the intensity of what you have before you. As you and your colleagues craft the long needed reform of our health care system, our organizations believe strongly that these reforms should be as inclusive as possible.

As you near completion on a health reform bill in the Finance Committee, we urge you to treat legal immigrants the same as you treat everyone else by removing all waiting periods in public health insurance programs for all legal immigrants, including them equitably in the subsidy structure and ensuring affordable health care for all children.

We share your goal of expanding the number of individuals who have affordable health insurance and reducing the number of uninsured in America. This means we must ensure that legal immigrants have equal access to subsidies and low income immigrants are not excluded from Medicaid because of the five year waiting period. The current waiting period in Medicaid is particularly unfair because the immigrants subject to the waiting period pay the exact same taxes as citizens. Earlier this year, thanks in no small part to your leadership, Congress eliminated the 5-year waiting period that prevented legal immigrant children from having affordable health care in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). We urge you to take the next steps in restoring fairness by mandating the inclusion of legal immigrants, including children and adults, so that Medicaid is available to all legal immigrants on the same basis as citizens. This is an issue of fundamental fairness, and voters across the political spectrum strongly support allowing legal immigrants to use the programs their taxes pay for.

We also urge you to make all immigrant children and pregnant women, without regard to their immigration status, eligible for Medicaid on the same basis as citizens. This is not only the right thing to do, it will save money over time by ensuring these residents have access to preventive care and rely less on expensive emergency room care. Universal coverage should include our most vulnerable.

All Americans deserve health care they can afford. We simply cannot afford half-measures and unfair exclusions in health reform that leave out millions of Americans.

Health Rights Organizing Project

The following organizations urge you to take these actions to ensure we are achieving truly responsible health reform that does no harm.

Sincerely,

Regional/National

Community Catalyst
Northeast Action
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
Campaign for Community Change
Gamaliel Foundation
Fair Immigration Reform Movement
Service Employees International Union
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Council of La Raza
National Health Law Program
One America
Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamérica (COFEM)
Coalition on Human Needs
ACORN
American Academy of Nursing
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Federation of Government Employees Local 3937, AFL-CIO
American Psychological Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of the Clinicians for the Underserved
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Center for Reproductive Rights
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Health Fund
Coalition for Asian American Children & Families
Community Action Partnership
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Council on Social Work Education
Families USA
First Focus
Friends Committee on National Legislation
General Commission on Religion and Race, The United Methodist Church
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
HIV Medicine Association
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
Laotian American National Alliance
La Union
League of United Latin American Citizens
Little Sisters of the Assumption U.S.A. Province
Main Street Alliance
Maternity Care Coalition

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Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations
National Alliances of Vietnamese
American Service Agencies
National Asian American Pacific
Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American
Women's Forum
National Employment Law Project
National Institute for Reproductive
Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Federation of Families for
Children's Mental Health
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Latino Behavioral Health
Association
National Network for Arab American
Communities
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women &
Families
National Women's Health Network
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social
Justice Lobby
Out of Many, One
Planned Parenthood Federation of
America
Polonians Organized to Minister to Our
Community, Inc
Raising Women's Voices for the Health
Care We Need
RESULTS
South Asian Americans Leading
Together
United Neighborhood Centers of
America
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and
Witness Ministries
U. S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Voices for America's Children
Western Center on Law & Poverty
American College of Obstetricians and
Gynecologists
American Civil Liberties Union
9to5, National Association of Working
Women
National Latina Institute for
Reproductive Health (NLIRH)
American Academy of Pediatrics
National Association of Community
Health Centers
Ibis Reproductive Health
The Tahirih Justice Center
National Women's Law Center
National Senior Citizens Law Center
Reproductive Health Technologies
Project
Mexican American Legal Defense and
Educational Fund
United Church of Christ, Justice and
Witness Ministries
Global Justice Ministry, Metropolitan
Community Churches
Legal Momentum
Protestants for the Common Good
National Physicians Alliance
Columban Center for Advocacy and
Outreach Missionary Society of St.
Columban
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center
Latino Organization of the Southwest
National Association for Children's
Behavioral Health
Spanish Coalition for Housing
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc

Alabama

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice

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Arizona

Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless
William E. Morris Institute for Justice

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families
LULAC Council 754 and Reform Immigration FOR America Campaign
The Christian Alliance

California

California Partnership Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)
Coastal Alliance for a United Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)
Justice Overcoming Boundaries in San Diego (JOB)
Korean Resource Center (KRC)
Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California
Asian Women's Shelter
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
California Primary Care Association
Human Agenda
International Institute of the Bay Area
Having Our Say
Korean American Family Service Center
National Council of Jewish Women, California
North East Medical Services
School of the Americas Watch, Chapter L.A.
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network
Visión y Compromiso
9to5 Bay Area

Los Angeles 9to5

Colorado

Colorado Progressive Coalition
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Progressive Action
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
9to5 Colorado
Colorado Center on Law and Policy

Connecticut

Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Citizens for Quality Sickle Cell Care, Inc.
Greater Hartford Legal Aid
New Haven Legal Assistance Association
People of Faith

Florida

Florida Immigrant Coalition
Catholic Charities Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami
Children's Services Council of Broward County
Farmworker Association of Florida
Hispanic Coalition, Inc
Pax Christ Northeast Florida
Social Justice Ministry of Cathedral Basilica of St Augustine

Georgia

Atlantans Building Leadership for Empowerment (ABLE)
Cobb Immigrant Alliance
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc.
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
OCA Georgia Chapter

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Georgia Rural Urban Summit
SisterSong Women of Color
Reproductive Health Collective
Atlanta 9to5
Raksha, Inc

Hawaii

Faith Action for Community Equity
(FACE)
Domestic Violence Action Center
Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive
Family Services

Idaho

Idaho Community Action network

Illinois

Gamaliel Metro Chicago
Korean American Resource and Cultural
Center (KRCC)
Pilsen Neighbors Community Council
South Suburban Action Conference
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Hispanic Bible School
Protestants for the Common Good
(Illinois)
Youth Service Bureau of Illinois Valley
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
The Voices and Faces Project
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and
Refugee Rights
La Voz Latina, Rockford
UnBuenDoctor
United African Organization
Logan Square Neighborhood
Association
Campaign for Better Health Care
Family Focus Aurora

Indiana

Immigrant Task Force
Middle Way House, Inc

Iowa

Iowa Citizens for Community
Improvement
Quad City Interfaith
Child and Family Policy Center

Kansas

Westside Community Action Network
Center

Kentucky

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Central
Leadership
Covering Kentucky Kids and Families

Louisiana

Louisiana Justice Institute

Maine

Maine Peoples Alliance
Maine Center for Economic Policy
The Maine Women's Lobby
Maine Equal Justice Partners
Maine Council of Senior Citizens

Maryland

Casa de Maryland
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health
Care Reform
Public Justice Center
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee
Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice
MassVOTE
Service Employees International Union
Massachusetts State Council U.F.C.W.
Local 1445
Health Care for All
Alliance to Develop Power (ADP)

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Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc
Greater Boston United for Justice with
Peace Coalition
Lowell Community Health Center
Massachusetts Citizens for Children
Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program
South Cove Community Health Center
The Disparities Solutions Center at
Massachusetts General Hospital
Irish Immigration Center
United for a Fair Economy
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Michigan

Michigan Organizing Project
Arab Community Center for Economic
& Social Services (ACCESS)
Gamaliel of Michigan
Michigan Universal Health Care Access
Network
Michigan Legal Services
Michigan League for Human Services
Joint-religious Organizing Network for
Action and Hope

Minnesota

ISALAH
Catholic Charities' Office for Social
Justice
Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs
Pax Christi Northwest Minnesota
The Leadership Council, Sisters,
Servants of the Immaculate Heart of
Mary

Missouri

Metro Organization for Racial and
Economic Equity (MORE2)
Metropolitan Congregations United
Adorers of the Blood of Christ
Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice
Institute for Peace & Justice

Intercommunity Housing Association
Bengal Enterprises, LLC
Parenting Life Skills Center
Human Rights Office, Catholic Diocese
of Kansas-City-St. Joseph

Montana

Montanans for Health Care

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in
the Public Interest
Lutheran Metro Ministry, Omaha

Nevada

Progressive Leadership Alliance of
Nevada

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Citizens Alliance

New Jersey

National Council of Jewish Women,
New Jersey State Public Affairs
Committee
New Jersey Immigration Policy Network
Results, Central New Jersey Domestic
Group
St. Anthony's Social Justice Group, St.
Anthony of Padua Church
Student Government Association,
Raritan Valley Community College
New Jersey Citizen Action
Haiti Solidarity Network of the North
East
(HSNNE)

New Jersey Forum for Human Rights
Community Partnership Learner Center
of Elizabeth, New Jersey

New Mexico

New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty

Health Rights Organizing Project

New Mexico Voices for Children
Planned Parenthood of New Mexico
Southwest Women's Law Center
Colonias Development Council
Community Coalition for Healthcare
Access
El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos
Healthcare Action New Mexico
New Mexico Coalition to end
Homelessness
Santa Fe Community Partnership
Santa Fe Living Wage Network
Somos Un Pueblo Unido
South West Organizing Project
Southwest Creations Collaborative
Southwest Women's Law Center
New Mexico Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice

New York

Alliance of Communities Transforming
Syracuse (ACTS)
VOICE- Buffalo
Citizen Action of New York
Make the Road New York
Building Movement Project
Center for Independence of the Disabled
Commission on the Public's Health
System
Community Healthcare Network
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization
Project
Community Journal Legal Defense &
Education Fund
Empire Justice Center
Foundation for Religion and Mental
Health
Global Justice Ministry
Greater New York Labor-Religion
Coalition
Hispanics United of Buffalo

Korean Community Services
Metropolitan New York, Inc.
La Fuente: NYCPP and LICPP
Latino Commission on AIDS
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public
Interest
Northern Manhattan Perinatal
Partnership, Inc
North Fork Spanish Apostolate
Office of Justice and Peace, Sisters of
Charity of New York
Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health
Access to Reach Greater Equity)
RACCOON, Inc
Reproductive Health Access Project
Society of Jesus, New York Province
South Asian Council for Social Services
Western New York Health Care
Campaign
African Services Committee
Council of People's Organizations
Jewish Community House of
Bensonhurst
Medicaid Matters
Flushing Jewish Community Council
Central American Refugee Center
Haitian Americans United for progress,
Inc. (HAUP)
Central American Refugee Center
(CARECEN, N.Y.)
Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social
Justice

North Carolina

C.A.R.E.
Latin American Coalition
Western Carolina Community Action
North Carolina Council of Churches

Ohio

Asian Services In Action, Inc.

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Justice and Witness Ministries
Ohio Empowerment Coalition
Voices for Ohio's Children
UHCAN Ohio
Results, Columbus, Ohio

Oregon

CAUSA, Oregon's Immigrant Rights
Pinos y Campesinos Unidos del
Noroeste (PCUN)
Bend-Condega Friendship Project
The Immigrant and Refugee Community
Organization
The Archimedes Movement
Oregon Health Action Campaign

Pennsylvania

HIAS and Council Migration Service
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Community Legal Services of
Philadelphia

Rhode Island

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Ocean State Action

South Carolina

South Carolina Fair Share

South Dakota

South Dakota for Health Care Solutions

Tennessee

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee
Rights Coalition
ETSU Language and Culture Resource
Center
Tennessee Justice Center

Texas

Healthcare for All Texas-Austin

La Fe Policy Research and Education
Center

Utah

Utah Health Policy Project

Vermont

Vermont Public Interest Research Group
Vermont Public Interest Group

Virginia

Tenants and Workers United
Virginia Organizing Project
New Bridges Immigrant Resource
Center
The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal
Analysis

Washington

Washington Community Action
Network
Lutheran Public Policy Office
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Parents Organizing For Welfare and
Economic Rights
Statewide Poverty Action Network
United Food and Commercial Workers
Local 21
WA Chapter American Academy of
Pediatrics
Community Health Plan/Community
Health Network of Washington
Washington Association of Community
and Migrant Health Centers
(WACMHC)
The Childrens Alliance
Legal Voice

Washington, D.C.

National Capital Immigrant Coalition
The Women's Collective

Health Rights Organizing Project

Latino Federation of Greater
Washington
National Asian Pacific American
Women's Forum-Washington, D.C.
Chapter

Wisconsin

Voces de la Frontera
9to5 Milwaukee

Wyoming

El Puente