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HEALTH CARE REFORM PROJECT

THE VOICE OF
AMERICANS FOR
CHANGE, NOW.

June 17, 1994

Ms. Melanne Verveer
Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy
Chief of Staff to the First Lady
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Melanne:

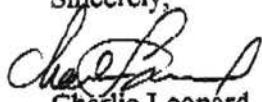
Enclosed is a letter to the President signed by 75 national organizations in support of the President's commitment to achieving universal health coverage for every American, as well as our opposition to the unfounded notion that "soft triggers" can achieve this goal -- a proposition which the signatories to this letter categorically reject.

Copies of this letter are also being delivered to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff as well as the Office of Public Liaison. By this transmittal we presume this can be considered officially delivered to the President.

We would also like to add that these organizations were recruited in less than 48 hours and that we believe many more organizations would join us in this effort if more time allowed. However, with the debate over this issue at a critical juncture in the key Congressional committees, we thought the letter should be forwarded to the President without further delay.

Although this began as an initiative of The Health Care Reform Project, the signatories obviously include many organizations who are not Project members. Accordingly, we intend to release this letter to the media and identify it as an effort independent of the Project.

Sincerely,


Charlie Leonard
General Consultants


Bob Chlopak

Triggers

June 17, 1994

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Throughout the health care debate, you have been a steadfast leader for comprehensive reform that includes, at a minimum, provisions to guarantee health insurance coverage and security for all Americans. All of our organizations have supported this objective, as have many Members of Congress.

But now the Congressional debate is reaching a decisive moment and it is more important than ever for all of us to insist on a bill that guarantees universal coverage, and not settle for anything less. Clearly, many Members of Congress are standing firm for universal coverage, but some are proposing substitute provisions like soft triggers that fall far short of guaranteeing coverage for every American.

Under the soft trigger approach, Congress would pledge to reexamine health reform at some future time if the goal of universal coverage is not achieved. For all practical purposes, soft triggers are nothing more than a way for Congress to delay a decision it should make this year: to guarantee every American health insurance coverage that can't be taken away. Soft triggers, even coupled with insurance reforms, won't guarantee universal health insurance coverage because they don't provide needed financing and don't contain costs. Indeed, soft triggers are like blanks: they sound real, but have no force or effect.

On the other hand, soft triggers may be politically attractive because they would enable some Members of Congress to state their commitment to universal coverage without voting to guarantee it. But we cannot allow Congress to raise Americans' hopes for real reform while delivering them much less. It's not enough for Congress to make the right noise on health reform; it must deliver the right result.

Similarly, we believe that insurance reforms alone will not guarantee universal coverage nor will they work without a universal system. Today, 80% of the uninsured are part of working families but receive no health insurance from their employers. Making insurance portable will leave the vast majority of these families without any coverage at all. And, it will not end the problem of job lock, because many employees cannot afford to pay the cost of coverage on their own and many employers will not contribute toward it.

In short, neither soft triggers nor insurance reforms, alone or in combination, will meet your goal for universal coverage or solve many of the most pressing health care problems. We will oppose any such legislation, and we urge you to follow through on your promise to veto these bills because they don't guarantee universal coverage, and state so publicly as soon as possible.

We appreciate your leadership and steadfast support for universal coverage, as well as your and Mrs. Clinton's tireless efforts. Be assured that we will continue to do everything possible to pass legislation that guarantees every American health insurance coverage.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Council
Alzheimer's Association
Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Association of Retired Persons
American Association of University Women
American Cancer Society
American College of Physicians
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
American Institute of Architects
American Medical Women's Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Radio Association
Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers
Campaign for Women's Health
The Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA)
Center For Community Change
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Health Fund
Communications Workers of America
Conservation Services Group
Episcopal Church
Families USA
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers
International Association of Machinists
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

International Chemical Workers
International Ladies Garment Workers Union
International Union of Electronic, Electrical Salaried, Machine and
Furniture Workers (IUE)
The League of Women Voters of the United States
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Community Action Foundation
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Association for Home Care
National Association of Letter Carriers
National Association of Public Hospitals
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Breast Cancer Coalition
National Caucus & Center on Black Aged, Inc.
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
National Council of Non-Profit Associations
National Council of Senior Citizens
National Education Association
National Health Policy Council
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Medical Political Action Committee
National Mental Health Association
National Minority AIDS Council
National Minority Business Council
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Women's Law Center
Network: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Older Women's League
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association
PAINNET INC
Protestant Health Alliance, a Division of InterHealth
Real Health Care for All
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Southern California Edison Company
Spina Bifida Association of America
The ARC
The Hollywood Women's Political Committee
Transport Workers of America
United Auto Workers
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
United Mine Workers
United Paperworkers International
United Steel Workers of America
United Transportation Union
Voice of the Retarded (VOR)