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HEALTH CARE
REFORM PROJECT

THE VOICE OF
AMERICANS FOR
CHANGE NOW.

For Immediate Release
July 7, 1994

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117 MAJOR GROUPS ATTACK DOLE PROPOSAL IN LETTER TO ALL SENATORS

WASHINGTON -- One hundred seventeen leading organizations that support health care reform today urged all Members of the United States Senate to oppose Senator Bob Dole's most recent health care idea, saying it "falls far short of guaranteeing Americans universal, secure coverage like Members of Congress [including Dole] now have."

Rather than passing a bill that comes even close to universal coverage, Dole's plan will leave "anywhere from 24-40 million Americans, many of them working, without health insurance." The Dole plan even cynically suggests eliminating employer-based financing for Members of Congress and the President.

"Americans don't want to take away good health care coverage from anyone," including Members of Congress, the letter says. "Instead, they want a guarantee of affordable coverage" for all "just like Members of Congress have now."

The Dole plan "would have serious, adverse impacts on millions of Americans," the letter continues. It "will continue to drive up health care costs and shift the burden onto the backs of businesses and families that pay for coverage."

The letter strongly criticizes Dole's proposal for encouraging employers only to provide catastrophic coverage with huge deductions, for not including any cost containment provisions and for penalizing small businesses that already cover their employees by forcing them to subsidize small businesses that don't. "The Dole plan even limits the insurance reforms which are at the heart of his plan," the letter says. "Insurers could deny coverage for pre-existing conditions for six months under group policies and for up to one year for individual who do not maintain continuous coverage."

Organizations signing the letter are listed on the attached.

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July 7, 1994

U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator:

We write to express our strong opposition to Senator Dole's new health reform proposal and to urge you not to support or co-sponsor this package. If you have already signed on, we ask you to withdraw your support.

In our collective view, the Dole plan not only falls far short of guaranteeing Americans universal, secure coverage like Members of Congress now have, but it also would have serious, adverse impacts on millions of Americans.

Most importantly, the Dole plan would not guarantee universal coverage or provide security to Americans who are now covered. The plan would leave anywhere from 24-40 million Americans, many of them working, without health insurance, which will continue to drive up health care costs and shift the burden onto the backs of businesses and families that pay for coverage.

Several other provisions in the Dole plan (or excluded) would hurt working families.

- The plan creates incentives for employers to offer only catastrophic coverage with high deductibles. This Medical Savings Account approach discourages patients from seeking cost-effective preventive care, and has been criticized by the American Medical News which warned that these accounts "threaten quality" in our health care system.
- The plan does not include any cost containment for individuals and businesses that pay for insurance, and by capping federal spending, the plan will actually shift more costs onto the private sector and families.
- The plan also invites employers to stop providing health insurance at work to low wage employees by linking employer coverage with eligibility for subsidies. Under the plan, employers would make their employees ineligible for subsidies by paying for 50% of their health insurance.

The Dole plan also would hurt small businesses that provide insurance by continuing to force them to subsidize the costs for businesses that don't. Further, unlike many other health plans, the Dole plan does not include any subsidies to help small, low wage firms that pay for insurance. And, it would delay the 100% tax deduction for self-employed individuals until the year 2000.

Senator Dole's plan would hurt older Americans by making cuts in Medicare without providing prescription drug coverage or any other needed benefits in return. The only long term care included in the plan is a tax deduction which only helps those who can afford such care in the first place. Further, the Dole plan allows insurers to charge older Americans four times more for premiums than younger people, even where "community rating" is applied.

Finally, the Dole plan even limits the insurance reforms which are at the heart of his plan. Insurers could deny coverage for pre-existing conditions for 6 months under group policies and for up to one year for individuals who do not maintain continuous coverage. Community rating provisions apply only to small employers, 50 and under, and even this provision permits discrimination against older Americans. Lastly, as The Washington Post recently editorialized, universal coverage is essential to make these insurance reforms work.

In closing, we believe that the Dole plan is seriously out of touch with the desires of Americans for health care reform. Perhaps the best example is the provision of the Dole plan that would deny Members of Congress and the President employer-provided health care. Americans do not want to take away good health care coverage from anyone, nor force families to face the health insurance system on their own. Instead, they want a guarantee of affordable coverage for every American, and health insurance at work, just like Members of Congress have now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Council

Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union

Alzheimer's Association

American Association for Partial Hospitalization, Inc.

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Association of Respiratory Care

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

American Association of University Women

American College of Nurses-Midwives

American College of Physicians

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Preventive Medicine

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 Health Planning Association

American Institute of Architects

American Medical Women's Association (AMWA)

American Postal Workers Union (APWU)

American Public Health Association

American Psychological Association

A. Philip Randolph Institute

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association of Black Cardiologists

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers

Business and Professional Women

Campaign for Women's Health

Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA)

Children's Defense Fund

Child Welfare League of America

Citizen Action

Center for Community Change
Communications Workers of America
Conservation Services Group
Consumers Union
D.C. Center for Independent Living
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Families USA
Family Service America
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Human Rights Campaign Fund
INTERFAITH IMPACT for Justice and Peace
Interreligious Health Care Access Campaign
International Association of Machinists
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
International Ladies Garment Workers Union
International Union of Electronic, Electrical Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers
Jewish Labor Committee
Grey Panthers
League of Women Voters of the United States
Legal Action Center
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Association for Community Health Centers
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Association for Music Therapy
National Association of Letter Carriers
National Association of People with AIDS
National Association of RV Parks and Camp Grounds
National Association of Public Hospitals
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Directors
National Association of Working Women
National Black Caucus of State Legislators
National Breast Cancer Coalition
National Caucus and Center on the Black Aged, Inc.
National Community Action Foundation
National Community Mental Healthcare Council
National Consumers League
National Council on Aging
National Council on Independent Living
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
National Council of Negro Women
National Council of Non-Profit Associations
National Council of Senior Citizens
National Education Association
National Family Farm Coalition
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
National Farmers Union
National Federation of the Blind
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Head Injury Foundation
National Health Care for the Homeless, Inc.
National Health Policy Council
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Medical Association

National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council
National Medical Association
National Medical Political Action Committee
National Minority AIDS Council
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Osteoporosis Foundation
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK - National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Neighbor to Neighbor
Pain Net, Inc.
Physician Leadership Committee for Healthcare Reform
Protestant Health Alliance - a Division of InterHealth
Older Women's League
Real Health Care for All
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Summit '93 Health Coalition
The Episcopal Church
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Auto Workers
United Mine Workers
United Steelworkers of America
United Transportation Union
Voice of the Retarded
Women of Reform Judaism
Women Strike for Peace

*Reform Project
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REFORM PROJECT****THE VOICE OF
AMERICANS FOR
CHANGE, NOW.****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
August 16, 1994Contact: Bob Chlopak, Charlie Leonard
202/289-5900**Pro-Reform Coalition Launches Ads
Against Rowland-Republican Substitute
Ad Endorses Gephardt Plan**

Washington, D.C. -- The Health Care Reform Project, the leading pro-reform coalition of business, providers, seniors, labor and consumers, today unveiled a new advertisement running on Washington, D.C. radio stations that sharply criticizes the bill recently introduced by Representatives Rowland, Cooper and Bilirakis, and concludes with an endorsement of Majority Leader Gephardt's plan.

The advertisement opens with an announcer saying: "Some politicians just don't get it on health care reform. First, they said there was no health care crisis. Now they've got a bill with no solutions."

The ad then describes the problems with the Rowland bill and concludes with the choice before the House. "If you think America needs health reform that costs you more, gives you less or leaves you out in the cold, support the Rowland-Republican substitute. But if you want affordable health coverage that can't be taken away, support the Gephardt plan."

The Project said alternative health reform plans have received comparatively little scrutiny and that it hoped the radio ad would make Congress, the media and others aware of the plan's serious shortcomings. The new ad says the Rowland plan is "the same fend-for-yourself approach we've seen before." It claims that the bill is particularly tough on seniors because it cuts Medicare without giving older Americans new benefits like prescription drugs or long term care. The ad also says the Rowland bill lacks effective cost containment measures and will make small businesses that cover their workers pay even higher insurance costs. The ad also criticizes the Rowland plan for falling considerably short of universal coverage. The plan is expected to achieve only about 90% coverage.

The ad will run for approximately one week on several Washington radio stations.

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