

July 10, 2006 – UPDATED 7/13/06 – CDHCI and Grassroot Institute of Hawaii (53)

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representative
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Majority Whip
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker and Reps. Boehner and Blunt:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we wanted to express our disagreement with the misleading letter you received on June 20, 2006 regarding H.R. 2355, the “Health Care Choice Act.” **This letter misrepresents the bill’s impact on patients and should be disregarded as false information.**

The Health Care Choice Act will increase competition, reduce regulation and red tape, create a national health insurance market, and provide consumers a choice to get affordable health insurance (thus reducing the number of uninsured Americans).

Rather than going through 50 different state regulatory processes, this bill will allow an insurance company to go through one process and sell to people in all 50 states. In this way, we can help people, not by setting up a massive new government bureaucracy, but by empowering individuals to make the best choice for themselves and their families.

The Health Care Choice Act will help bring down the cost of health insurance as much as 12 percent, on average, by letting people compare insurance plans across the country and pick the one that is right for them. By offering people choices in a nationwide health insurance market, it will reduce the cost of health insurance for Americans. And the ones who will benefit the most are the two-thirds of the 45 million uninsured Americans who have incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level who cite “unaffordability” as the top reason for why they are uninsured.

Under the Health Care Choice Act, individuals will be able to shop nationwide for policies that would follow them wherever they go. Moreover, if individuals leave a job, or are in between jobs, they will be able to maintain health insurance when they need it most.

There are an estimated 1,800 insurance "mandates" across the country, and the costs add up. New York requires every insurance policy sold there to cover podiatry. Acupuncture coverage is mandated in 11 states (CA, FL, MT, NM, NV, OR, RI, TX, VA and WA), massage therapy in 5 (FL, MD, NH, UT and WA) and chiropractors in 47.

The Council for Affordable Health Insurance estimates that state mandates can hike insurance prices 20 to 45 percent. For example, a health policy for a single Pennsylvanian costs roughly \$1,500 annually. Cross the Delaware River into New Jersey, and a similar health plan costs about \$4,000, thanks to government regulations.

The problem is not insufficient state mandates, but rather too many state mandates. There is a lack of competition, which is driving up the cost of insurance and driving individuals out of the insurance market. This leaves them vulnerable to catastrophic illness and less likely to get basic screenings such as mammograms that could save their life.

The Health Care Choice Act will reduce health care costs anywhere from 5 to 20 percent nationwide. It doesn't cost government a dime. It doesn't create a new federal bureaucracy. And, it gives uninsured Americans, who are currently priced out of the market, a choice to get affordable health insurance.

We believe that creating a national market for health insurance is a vital step in ensuring that millions of Americans have access to affordable coverage. And the Health Care Choice Act is the best way to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

60 Plus Association
Achievement Dynamics, LLC
ADL Real Estate Valuation, Inc.
Alliance for Affordable Services
Alliance for Worker Freedom
American Conservative Union
American Shareholders Association
Americans for Tax Reform
Association of American Physicians and Surgeons
Atlantic Pacific Claims Services, Inc.
Butler & Son Funeral Homes Inc.
Chesapeake Life Insurance Company
Chris Humphrey, Photographer
Christus Medicus Foundation
Coalition Against Guaranteed Issue
Consumers Driven Health Care Institute
Consumers for Health Care Choices
Council for Affordable Health Insurance
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste
D&D Bookbindery
DBA Nitro-Green of Hayden, AL
EBay Inc
Fairness Foundation
Federal Edge, Inc.
Fievet Enterprises

Freedom Works
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Hispanic Business Roundtable
HouseCleaners
HSA Coalition
International Catholic Lawyers Society
JB Investments / JB Properties - Kenray, Inc.
Jean Freeman & Associates
Karl H. Rech, Au.D., Doctor of Audiology
K.G.B. Electric
Latino Coalition
Legg and Associates
Lexicon Services
Medical Savings Insurance
MEGA Life and Health Insurance Company
Mid-West National Life Insurance Company of Tennessee
National Association of the Self-Employed
National Grange
National Taxpayers Union
Portable Computer Systems
Rich Productions, LLC
Seattle Home Show
Simplified Solutions
Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council
Square One Media Network
Sterling Brokerage & Business Advisors
The Grape Vine
Works Cooperative Inc.

Cc: Representative John Shadegg
U.S. House of Representatives