

Religious Leaders Call for Political Courage, Vision, Leadership, and Faith in Health Care Reform

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This letter was sponsored by the Health Care Working Group of the Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC) and Faithful Reform in Health Care. In addition to the names and organizations listed above, over 4,000 members of faith communities from all 50 states have signed it. The letter and all signatures may be viewed at <http://www.faithfulreform.org>.

February 24, 2010

Dear Mr. President and Members of Congress:

We are communities of faith who have supported comprehensive health care reform for decades. We also have offered vocal support – and occasional constructive criticism – of the health care reform effort over the last year. We write to you at this critical juncture to urge you to complete the task at hand on behalf of the millions who are left out and left behind in our current health care system.

Opportunities to comprehensively address our broken health care system are rare. Decades of failed attempts at reform testify to the difficulty of this task, and we know that the current effort has not been easy. However, we now stand closer than ever before to historic health care reform. Turning back now could mean justice delayed for another generation and an unprecedented opportunity lost.

“Let us not delay health care justice any longer. This is your moment for political courage, vision, leadership and faith. We urge you to take heart and move meaningful health care reform forward.”

We know that no comprehensive health care reform bill will be perfect. (Indeed, if any piece of legislation ever fulfills our full vision, our vision is far too small.) However, we also know – as providers and consumers of services and care – that inaction at this critical moment is no way forward:

- Without reform, tens of thousands will continue to die needlessly each year for lack of access to care.
- Without reform, tens of millions will remain uninsured and without adequate access to a full range of services.
- Without reform, health costs will continue to grow much faster than wages.
- Without reform, many millions of hard-working people and their children will join the ranks of the uninsured and underinsured.
- Without reform, businesses, staggered by increasing employee health costs, will either drop coverage or will be unable to make needed investments.
- Without reform, the nation’s economy – and its ability to create jobs – will suffer.

As people of faith, we envision a society where every person is afforded health, wholeness and human dignity. Martin Luther King, Jr., famously wrote in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail” that “justice too long delayed is justice denied.” Less well known is his admonition that “of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

Let us not delay health care justice any longer. This is your moment for political courage, vision, leadership and faith. We urge you to take heart and move meaningful health care reform forward.

National Organizations

Adorers of the Blood of Christ
African Methodist Episcopal Church
American Association of Pastoral Counselors
American Baptist Churches, USA
American Friends Service Committee
American Muslim Health Professionals
Apostolic Catholic Church
Association of Professional Chaplains
The Beatitudes Society
The Blue Mountain Lotus Society (Buddhist)
Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Church Women United
Community of Christ Ecumenical Ministries
Daughters of Mary and Joseph
Disciples Justice Action Network
Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Evangelicals for Social Action
Faithful America

Faithful Reform in Health Care
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Interfaith Worker Justice
Islamic Medical Association of North America
Islamic Society of North America
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
Jewish Women International
Maryknoll Sisters
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Mennonite Church USA
Mercy Associates
Metropolitan Community Churches, Global Justice
Ministry
National Black Church Initiative
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
National Episcopal Health Ministries
National Ministries, American Baptist Churches, USA
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
PICO National Network
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
Progressive Christian Alliance

Progressive National Baptist Convention
Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of St. Joseph
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sisters of St. Joseph Third Order of St. Francis
Leadership Team
Sisters of the Holy Names
Sojourners
The National Advocacy Center, Sisters of the
Good Shepherd
The Universal Anglican Church
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ
United Church of Christ, United Black
Christians
United Methodist Church, General Board of
Church and Society
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations
Ursuline Sisters
World Without Borders Interfaith Sufi Ashram

Regional/State Organizations: Albany Area United Methodist Church, New York • Arizona Ecumenical Council • Arkansas Interfaith Alliance • Arkansas Methodist Federation for Social Action • California Church Impact • California Council of Churches • Central States Synod of the Evangelical • Lutheran Church in America • Christian Activities Coalition, Connecticut • Coalition of Religious Communities, Utah • Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc., Connecticut • Colorado Council of Churches • Daughters of Mary and Joseph, California • Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families • Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon • Faith Inspired Alliance for Health Care Reform, Washington • Florida-Bahamas Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Florida Church Women United Ecumenical Action • Florida Council of Churches • Health Action New Mexico • Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care Faith Caucus • Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care of Connecticut • Jubilee Justice Task Force of the United Church of Christ, Massachusetts • Justice & Witness Commission of the Kansas/Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ • Kentucky Council of Churches • Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - Colorado • Lutheran Advocacy - Illinois • Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - New Mexico • Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania • Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Oregon • Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota • Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi • Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin • Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey • Lutheran Office of Public Policy, California • Lutheran Office on Public Policy, Maryland • Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State • Maine Council of Churches • MICA Project, Washington • Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network • Mid-Michigan Coalition for Health Care Reform • Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates, Oregon • Mississippi Human Services Coalition • Missouri Health Care for All • Missouri IMPACT • Missouri Jobs with Justice • Montgomery Health Care Action (MHCA), Maryland • New Mexico Conference of Churches • North Carolina Council of Churches • North Carolina Council of Imams • North Carolina Fair Share • Northwest Minnesota Pax Christi • Ohio Council of Churches • OMNI Center for Peace, Justice & Ecology, Arkansas • Oregon-Idaho Methodist Federation for Social Action • Parish Nurse Ministries of New York, Inc. • Pax Christi Florida and Call to Action • Pax Christi Northeast Florida • Pennsylvania Central Conference, United Church of Christ, Justice and Peace Ministries Team • Pennsylvania Council of Churches • Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church Advocacy Resource Team • Presbytery of Baltimore, Maryland • Protestants for the Common Good, Illinois • RESULTS Columbus, Ohio • Rhode Island State Council of Churches • Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Ohio • Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Leadership Team • Sisters of St. Joseph, Massachusetts • Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis, Missouri • South Carolina Christian Action Council • Texas Impact • Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland • Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey • United Action Connecticut • Ursulines of Tildonk for Justice and Peace, New York • Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy • Washington Association of Churches • Washington State Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice • Western North Carolina Conference Methodist Federation for Social Action • Wisconsin Council of Churches