

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 19, 2009

Dear Grover,

As Congress debates how to solve our health care crisis, Americans know that current government-run health programs – Medicaid and Medicare – are fiscally unsustainable, too often result in worse patient outcomes than private plans, and are susceptible to waste, fraud, and abuse. The solution to our problems is clearly not another government-run plan designed by bureaucrats and politicians in Washington, DC.

This week we join Representatives to introduce a strong, Republican alternative to the big-spending, more-government ideas supported by Congressional Democrats and the White House. Our bill, the Patients' Choice Act, will propose comprehensive health care reform, in a manner which puts patients back in control of their own health care decisions, creates a viable health insurance market, and gives states greater flexibility to develop innovative solutions. Our plan will empower patients, not bureaucrats, to choose their doctor and get the medicines they need.

At a time when our nation is in recession, one out of every three federal dollars is spent on health care, and too many Americans struggle to pay their bills, health care reform should not require new federal spending. Our plan is, in fact, the only health care proposal to date which guarantees universal access to health for all Americans, without creating new federal programs or enacting a single payer government-run health plan. And it is the goal of the Patients' Choice Act to provide all Americans access to affordable health coverage without raising taxes.

To accomplish this goal, our bill equalizes the tax treatment of health insurance, creating a system which is fairer for more Americans. The bill replaces the individual tax exclusion on employer-provided health insurance with a tax credit for taxpaying individuals and families. The revenue raised by the repeal of the tax exclusion will be entirely offset by the gross tax reduction effects of the tax credit. For non-taxpayers eligible for credit, our bill will prescribe that the funding for this voucher come from spending decreases generated by entitlement reforms in the bill, such that spending increases are entirely offset by reductions in spending.

As fiscal conservatives with records of advocating for lower taxes and sensible spending, we believe that the tax cuts in the Patients' Choice Act will exceed tax increases, resulting in a net tax reduction. Should it become clear to us that modifications are needed to our bill to make it both budget-neutral and revenue-neutral, you can be confident we will work to ensure a final bill product will not raise taxes. This is in keeping with our long-held personal goal of not supporting new federal spending.


Beyond the immediate budget window, proposed reforms will dynamically impact health care markets, leading to significantly lower health care costs and savings for patients and providers. The bill will provide an innovative, sound, and clear alternative to current federally-dictated health care plans being debated in Washington, DC.

We look forward to working with you and other Americans to create a health care market where all Americans can afford coverage, and all patients have real choice.

Sincerely,



Dr. Tom Coburn, Oklahoma
U.S. Senator



Richard Burr, North Carolina
U.S. Senator