

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

As members and supporters of the Arbeter Ring (Workmen's Circle) in California, a progressive Jewish organization that has pursued the goal of universal, national health insurance for over one hundred years, we wish to commend you for insisting that any final Senate health reform bill include a robust and comprehensive public insurance option so that millions of Americans can finally obtain the affordable, high-quality healthcare afforded to citizens of all other advanced nations. We fear, however, that in an effort to avoid a Republican filibuster, Senator Reid and others in the Democratic leadership may be willing to surrender this principle in order to obtain the requisite 60 Senate votes. We urge you to stand firm and oppose all attempts to sacrifice the long-term health and financial security of our nation for such temporary political expediency that may postpone long overdue reform for decades.

We understand that any healthcare reform bill that passes this year will, of necessity, be a work-in-progress and will be amended and improved by future legislation, but we also hope you will strenuously combat any Congressional legislation that would prevent individual states from adopting health insurance plans that are more comprehensive, just, and/or more generous than those of our federal government. As you no doubt are aware, in 2007-2008 our own California legislature twice passed an innovative and widely popular statewide single-payer health insurance plan that, unfortunately, was twice vetoed by our Republican governor. Governments on both the national and state level stand to learn and gain from the creativity and experience of state-based healthcare initiatives in the future.

Lastly, we urge you, as our senior female Senator, to resist any attempt by the Senate to ratify the House's anti-choice Stupak amendment, which makes insurance coverage for abortion virtually inaccessible to millions of women purchasing insurance policies through the proposed health insurance exchange, even if they use their own resources to buy coverage. We know that you share our belief that broadly available and unencumbered reproductive healthcare is as fundamental to women's health as access to mammograms or pap smears. And that Congress first and foremost needs to be a guardian of *all* the public's health, not an enforcer of private religious conviction.

Thank you for taking our comments and views to heart as you carry out your vital legislative duties. We remain proud of your many years of service to the people of California and the nation. We hope that in the current Congressional healthcare debate, you will make us prouder still!

Sincerely yours,

Date: