
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 have also 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.

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.

Sincerely,

National Faith Leaders

The Reverend Geoffrey Black

President and General Minister
United Church of Christ

Sister Simone Campbell

Executive Director
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice
Lobby

Margurite Carter

National Board President
Church Women United

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry

President, Council of Bishops
African Methodist Episcopal Church

The Reverend Mark S. Hanson

Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Reverend Michael Kinnamon, Ph.D.

General Secretary
National Council of the Churches of Christ in
the USA

The Reverend Michael E. Livingston

Executive Director
International Council of Community Churches

Sister Gayle Lwanga

National Coordinator
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the
Good Shepherd

A. Roy Medley

General Secretary
American Baptist Churches, Inc.

Mary Ellen McNish

General Secretary
American Friends Service Committee

The Reverend Peter Morales

President
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations

Morna Murray

President
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good

The Reverend Gradye Parsons

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Bishop Gregory V. Palmer

President, Council of Bishops
United Methodist Church

Rabbi David Saperstein

Director
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Dr. Carl A. Sheingold

Executive Vice President
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

Dr. Ronald Sider

President
Evangelicals for Social Action

The Reverend Dr. T. DeWitt Smith

President
Progressive National Baptist Convention

Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed

National Director
Office for Interfaith & Community Alliances
Islamic Society of North America

Rev. Linda Hanna Walling

Executive Director
Faithful Reform in Health Care

Jim Wallis

President and CEO
Sojourners

The Reverend Dr. Sharon E. Watkins

General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the
United States and Canada

Lori Weinstein

Executive Director
Jewish Women International

Sarah Weintraub

Executive Director
Buddhist Peace Fellowship

Reverend Heyward Wiggins

Co-Chair
PICO National Network

Rabbi Eric Yoffie

President
Union for Reform Judaism

National Organizations

Adorers of the Blood of Christ	Mennonite Church USA
African Methodist Episcopal Church	Mercy Associates
American Association of Pastoral Counselors	Metropolitan Community Churches, Global Justice Ministry
American Baptist Churches, USA	National Black Church Initiative
American Friends Service Committee	National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
American Muslim Health Professionals	National Episcopal Health Ministries
Apostolic Catholic Church	National Ministries, American Baptist Churches, USA
Association of Professional Chaplains	NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
The Beatitudes Society	PICO National Network
The Blue Mountain Lotus Society (Buddhist)	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
Buddhist Peace Fellowship	Progressive Christian Alliance
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good	Progressive National Baptist Convention
Church Women United	Sisters of Mercy
Community of Christ Ecumenical Ministries	Sisters of St. Joseph
Daughters of Mary and Joseph	School Sisters of Notre Dame
Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	Sisters of St. Joseph Third Order of St. Francis Leadership Team
Disciples Justice Action Network	Sisters of the Holy Names
The Episcopal Church	Sojourners
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	The National Advocacy Center, Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Evangelicals for Social Action	The Universal Anglican Church
Faithful America	Union for Reform Judaism
Faithful Reform in Health Care	United Church of Christ
Friends Committee on National Legislation	United Church of Christ, United Black Christians
Interfaith Worker Justice	United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
Islamic Medical Association of North America	Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Islamic Society of North America	Ursuline Sisters
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation	World Without Borders Interfaith Sufi Ashram
Jewish Women International	
Maryknoll Sisters	
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office	

State/Regional Organizations

Albany Area United Methodist Church, New York	Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota
Arizona Ecumenical Council	Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi
Arkansas Interfaith Alliance	Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin
Arkansas Methodist Federation for Social Action	Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey
California Church Impact	Lutheran Office of Public Policy, California
California Council of Churches	Lutheran Office on Public Policy, Maryland
Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State
Christian Activities Coalition, Connecticut	Maine Council of Churches
Coalition of Religious Communities, Utah	MICAH Project, Washington
Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc., Connecticut	Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network
Colorado Council of Churches	Mid-Michigan Coalition for Health Care Reform
Daughters of Mary and Joseph, California	Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates, Oregon
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families	Mississippi Human Services Coalition
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon	Missouri Health Care for All
Faith Inspired Alliance for Health Care Reform, Washington	Missouri IMPACT
Florida-Bahamas Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Missouri Jobs with Justice
Florida Church Women United Ecumenical Action	Montgomery Health Care Action (MHCA), Maryland
Florida Council of Churches	New Mexico Conference of Churches
Health Action New Mexico	North Carolina Council of Churches
Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care Faith Caucus	North Carolina Council of Imams
Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care of Connecticut	North Carolina Fair Share
Jubilee Justice Task Force of the United Church of Christ, Massachusetts	Northwest Minnesota Pax Christi
Justice & Witness Commission of the Kansas/Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ	Ohio Council of Churches
Kentucky Council of Churches	OMNI Center for Peace, Justice & Ecology, Arkansas
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, Colorado	Oregon-Idaho Methodist Federation for Social Action
Lutheran Advocacy, Illinois	Parish Nurse Ministries of New York, Inc.
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, New Mexico	Pax Christi Florida and Call to Action
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania	Pax Christi Northeast Florida
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Oregon	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

Coordinated by the Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC) Health Care Working Group and Faithful Reform in Health Care

Contacts: Rev. Cynthia Abrams / 202.488.5636 / cabrams@umc-gbcs.org and
Rev. Linda Walling / 216.685.0796 / walling@faithfulreform.org

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

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In addition to the names and organizations listed above, 4000 individuals and a host of local organizations and congregations have signed the letter.

The letter and the complete list of names and organizations may be viewed online
 on the website of Faithful Reform in Health Care:
<http://www.faithfulreform.org/storage/frhc/docs/sign-on%20letter%2002-24-10.pdf>