

December 10, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader of the United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

cc: The Honorable Robert Menendez  
The Honorable Jeff Bingaman  
The Honorable John D. Rockefeller  
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka  
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
The Honorable Roland W. Burris

Re: Support for Menendez amendment to provide states with the option to remove the five-year waiting period for legal immigrants in Medicaid

Dear Majority Leader Reid,

Thank you for your leadership in advancing health care reform this year. We, the undersigned organizations, write in support of Senator Menendez's amendment to the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act," co-sponsored by Senators Durbin, Rockefeller and Bingaman. The amendment would give states the option to remove the five-year waiting period for legal immigrants to obtain Medicaid. Allowing states to extend Medicaid coverage to low-income, legal immigrants will save lives and meet the President's health reform goals of expanding coverage and controlling costs.

Immigrants contribute to this nation's workforce, pay their fair share of taxes, and pursue citizenship to its fullest potential. Yet, under existing law, many low-income legal immigrants must wait five years to obtain Medicaid coverage. The five-year waiting period prevents individuals from obtaining necessary services that keep serious medical conditions from worsening. This type of restriction is also unfair and excludes immigrants from a critical safety net that their taxes help support. Providing states with the option to lift the bar helps ensure that legal immigrants have access to timely treatment and avoid more expensive emergency room care. It will also help promote a stronger national workforce and less reliance on emergency room visits, the costs of which would be shifted to all consumers.

The majority of Americans support eliminating the five-year waiting period for legal immigrants, and when Congress passed the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009, it voted overwhelmingly to provide states the option to end Medicaid barriers for lawfully residing children and pregnant women. The Senate should finish the job and allow states to extend Medicaid to all otherwise eligible immigrants.

Providing Medicaid coverage, rather than subsidies, would also save costs for the government. Extending Medicaid coverage would provide this vulnerable population access to preventive and critical health care services that may not be available to low-income legal immigrants if they

were to purchase an insurance plan offered through the Exchange.

As the Senate continues its debate on health care reform legislation, we urge you to work with President Obama to include Senator Menendez's amendment into the final bill to restore equity for low-income legal immigrants. We stand ready to join you to push for enactment of such reform this year.

Sincerely,

**National organizations**

American Association of University Women  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Local 3937, AFL-CIO  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Jewish Committee  
American Medical Student Association  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Asian American Justice Center  
Asian Americans for Community Involvement  
Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice  
Asian Health Services, Inc.  
Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved  
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs  
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
Boat People SOS  
Brazilian Total Assistance, Inc.  
Campaign for Community Change  
Catholics for Choice  
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good  
Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
Center for Policy Analysis/EQUAL Health  
Center for Reproductive Rights  
Center for Rural Affairs  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Children Now  
Commission on the Public's Health System  
Community Access National Network  
Community Catalyst  
Community Organizations in Action  
Fair Immigration Reform Movement  
Families USA

Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Global Justice Ministry of Metropolitan Community Churches  
Global Workers Justice Alliance  
Health Care for American Now  
Health Rights Organizing Project  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society  
HIVictorious, Inc.  
Ibis Reproductive Health  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jobs with Justice  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Laotian American National Alliance  
Law Students for Reproductive Justice  
Main Street Alliance  
Mexican-American Coalition For Immigration Reform  
Mexican-American Legal Defense & Education Fund  
National Abortion Federation  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities  
National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Youth  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging  
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
National Association of People with AIDS  
National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy  
National Coalition for LGBT Health  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza  
National Day Laborer Organizing Network  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Hispanic Health Foundation  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Forum  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild  
National Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium  
National Latina Health Network  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Minority AIDS Council  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
National Network of Abortion Funds  
National Organization of Women  
National Physicians Alliance

National Senior Citizens Law Center  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
NCLR/CSULB Center for Latino Community Health  
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations  
Organization of Chinese Americans  
Out of Many, One  
PHI Health Care for Health Care Workers  
Plan of Action in a Changing Era  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Connection  
Progressive Jewish Alliance  
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Reproductive Health Access Project  
Salvadoran American National Network  
Samoan National Nurses Association  
Service Employees International Union  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.  
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective  
South Asian Americans Leading Together  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center  
The AIDS Institute  
U.S. Positive Women's Network  
Union of Liberian Associations in America, National Immigration Task Force  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
United African Organization  
United Farm Worker Foundation  
UNITED SIKHS  
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
USAction  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Women's Voices for the Earth

### **Regional organizations**

Northeast Action  
United, Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Northeast Region  
Legal Voice  
Northwest Immigrant Rights Coalition

### **State organizations**

#### Alabama

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice, Inc.  
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice

#### Arizona

Arizona Advocacy Network

Arkansas

Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma, Inc.

California

ACCESS/Women's Health Rights Coalition

ACT for Women and Girls

Asian Law Alliance

Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California

Cal-Islanders Humanitarian Association

California Immigrant Policy Center

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

California Partnership

California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

California State Association of Counties

California Welfare Directors' Association

Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship

Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño

Chinatown Community Development Center

Chinese for Affirmative Action

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles

County Welfare Directors Association

County Welfare Directors Association of California

Filipino Advocates for Justice

Having Our Say

Health Access California

Healthy Kids Sonoma County

HIV ACCESS

Immigrant Rights and Education Network

International Institute of the Bay Area

Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Southwest District

Korean Community Center of the East Bay

Korean Resource Center

La Clínica de La Raza

Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

Latino Health Alliance

Legal Aid Society - San Mateo County

Maitri

Maternal and Child Health Access

National Council of Jewish Women, California

Pacific Institute for Women's Health

Redwood Community Health Coalition

SATRANG

Service Employees International Union Local 721

Western Center on Law and Poverty  
Women Organized to Resist Life-threatening Disease

Colorado

Colorado Center on Law and Policy  
Colorado Council of Churches  
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition  
Colorado Progressive Coalition

Connecticut

Connecticut Citizen Action Group  
Hartford Areas Rally Together  
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission  
Sneha Inc.  
United Action Connecticut

District of Columbia

ASHA For Women  
National Capital Immigrant Coalition  
Treatment Action Group

Florida

Children's Services Council of Broward County  
Concilio Nacional Hispano  
Florida Citizen Action Network  
Florida Legal Services, Inc.  
Hispanic Coalition  
Pax Christi Northeast Florida

Georgia

Department of Multicultural Affairs at Grady Health System  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit  
Hispanic Health Coalition of Georgia  
SisterLove, Inc.  
The Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc.

Guam

Guam Communications Network

Hawaii

Bay Clinic, Inc.  
Domestic Violence Action Center  
Ke Ali`i Maka`ainana Hawaiian Civic Club  
Lanai Community Health Center

Idaho

Idaho Community Action Network  
United Action for Idaho

Illinois

AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
Campaign for Better Health Care  
Citizen Action - Illinois  
HIAS Chicago  
Korean American Resource & Cultural Center  
La Voz Latina  
Working Hands Legal Clinic

Iowa

Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network  
Decorah First United Methodist Church  
Diversity Service Center of Iowa  
Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church  
Iowa Citizen Action Network  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Tingley & Elston U.M.C.  
Wichard U.M.C.

Kentucky

Advocacy Action Network  
Covering Kentucky Kids and Families  
Kentucky Council of Churches  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center

Maine

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project  
Maine People's Alliance

Maryland

CASA de Maryland, Inc.  
Columbian Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Identity, Inc.  
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative  
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform  
Progressive Maryland  
Suburban Hospital

Massachusetts

Alliance to Develop Power  
Berkshire Immigrant Center  
Chelsea Collaborative  
Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program at Hampshire College

Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc.  
Hartford Areas Rally Together  
Health Care for All  
IUE-CWA Local 201  
Jobs with Justice  
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission  
Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
North Shore Labor Council  
Service Employees International Union Local 615  
South Cove Community Health Center  
United for Justice with Peace

### Michigan

Arab Community Center for Economics & Social Services  
Michigan Citizen Action  
Michigan Organizing Project  
Michigan Universal Health Care Access Network

### Minnesota

Catholic Charities of St. Paul/Minneapolis  
Jewish Community Action  
Take Action Minnesota  
Unite Here Local 17

### Mississippi

Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance

### Missouri

Grassroots Organizing  
Human Rights Office - Catholic Diocese of Kansas City  
Interfaith Residence  
Missouri AIDS Task Force  
Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition

### Montana

Montana HCAN  
Montana Human Rights Network  
Montana Organizing Project  
Working for Equality and Economic Liberation

### Nebraska

Center for Rural Affairs  
Lutheran Metro Ministry  
National Association of Social Workers – Nebraska Chapter  
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest

Nevada

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Progressive Leadership Association of Nevada

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Citizens Alliance for Action

New Jersey

BlueWaveNJ  
Migration and Refugee Services  
New Americans Program of United Way of Central Jersey  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Immigrant Policy Network  
New Jersey State Public Affairs Committee, National Council of Jewish Women  
New Labor  
Student Government Association, Raritan Valley Community College  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

New Mexico

El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos  
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
Somos Un Pueblo Unido  
Southwest Women's Law Center

New York

Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Inc.  
African Services Committee  
Building Movement Project  
Center for Independence of the Disabled  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY  
Central American Refugee Center  
Citizen Action of New York  
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families  
Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center  
Community Journal Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.  
Empire Justice Center  
Flushing Jewish Community Council\  
Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York  
Health Care For All New York  
Hispanic Senior Action Council  
Hudson Valley Community Coalition  
Indochina Sino-American Community Center  
Institute for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, Inc.  
Interfaith Center of NY

Kalusugan Coalition, Inc.  
Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc.  
La Union (UCL, Inc.)  
Laborers Local #79  
LaGuardia Community College Computer Club  
Latino Commission on AIDS, Inc.  
Law Offices of Bryan Pu-Folkes  
Legal Aid Society - New York City  
Make the Road New York  
Medicaid Matters New York  
Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign  
New Immigrant Community Empowerment  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest  
New York State Nurses Association  
New York State Wide Senior Action Council, Inc.  
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage  
Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, Inc.  
Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity)  
Queens Counseling Services of the Foundation for Religion and Mental Health  
Reconciliation and Cultural Cooperative Network  
Reproductive Health Access Project  
Rockland Immigration Coalition  
Shakti Peer Group  
Tai & Sobiloff, P.C.  
The Bronx Health Link, Inc.

#### North Carolina

Community Assistance for Rural Empowerment  
Latin American Coalition

#### North Dakota

NDPeople.org

#### Ohio

Contact Center  
Ohio Empowerment Coalition  
Ohio Faith and Democracy Collaborative  
Ohio Organizing Collaborative/NOAH  
ProgressOhio  
UHCAN Ohio

#### Oklahoma

Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma, Inc.

#### Oregon

Northwest Workers' Justice Project  
Oregon Action

Pennsylvania

Community Legal Services of Philadelphia  
New Voices Pittsburgh: Women of Color for Reproductive Justice  
PennAction  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Ebeye Community Health Center

Rhode Island

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
International Institute of Rhode Island  
Ocean State Action

South Carolina

South Carolina Fair Share

South Dakota

HCAN Organizer for South Dakota  
South Dakotans for Health Care Solutions

Tennessee

Street Works  
Tennessee Citizen Action  
Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition

Texas

Health Care for All Texas  
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center

Virginia

HIV Medicine Association  
Hogar Immigrant Services  
New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center  
Tenants and Workers United  
Virginia Organizing Project  
Virginia Poverty Law Center

Washington

Asian Counseling & Referral Service  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Washington Chapter  
CASA Latina

Children's Alliance of Washington State  
Community to Community Development  
International Community Health Services  
Literary Source  
Lutheran Public Policy Office  
Northwest Health Law Advocates  
OneAmerica  
Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights  
Tacoma Community House  
UAW 4121  
Washington CAN!

West Virginia

West Virginia Citizen Action Group  
West Virginia Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Wisconsin

Citizen Action of Wisconsin  
Logan Square Neighborhood Association  
Milwaukee Latino Health Coalition  
Voces de la Frontera  
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families