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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS

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Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman John Larson
House Democratic Caucus
202A Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
Office of the Majority Leader
H-107, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Vice Chairman Xavier Becerra
House Democratic Caucus
202A Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Majority Whip James Clyburn
Office of the Majority Whip
H-329, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

February 5, 2010

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Whip Clyburn, Chairman Larson and Vice Chairman Xavier Becerra:

As the House and Senate move toward passage of final legislation that will improve the quality and reduce the cost of health insurance in America, I urge you to include these priorities, which are especially important to the people of central New Mexico.

I continue to support a strong public option and I consider reconciliation an acceptable means to accomplish this goal. We can simultaneously reduce the deficit and avoid raising taxes by including the public option. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the public option will save taxpayers between \$25 billion and \$110 billion, and will save billions more when private insurance corporations compete to bring down premium costs.

I am concerned that the excise tax included in the Senate legislation would impede innovation, limit access to life-saving medical technology, and lead to job losses in the medical device industry. I am particularly concerned about the impact this tax would have on a facility in my district that manufactures surgical equipment. The facility, which employs over 650 New

Mexicans, competes directly with two plants in Juárez, Mexico. The additional burden of an arbitrary excise tax would hamper its ability to compete and could threaten these well-paying jobs. I am fighting hard every day to keep and create jobs in New Mexico and in the United States. Health insurance reform should not run counter to these efforts.

I remain concerned about a proposal in the Senate-passed legislation to tax high-value health insurance plans. Real life experience has clearly shown us that this tax will most likely be passed along to insurance consumers. For New Mexico's working families that have forgone salary increases in exchange for strong insurance benefits, the cost thresholds for taxation are simply too low. As health insurance costs continue to increase at a rate greater than inflation, more and more middle-income New Mexicans would be forced to pay this tax.

Finally, as we reform our nation's health insurance system, we cannot forget our treaty obligations to Native Americans. As you know, I successfully secured the language to incorporate the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) in the House version of the health insurance reform bill. The IHCIA would sustain, expand, and modernize the Indian Health Service, which provides comprehensive health services for Native Americans.

I look forward to working with you to pass health insurance reform legislation that will reduce the deficit, reduce the cost of insurance, and improve the quality of care for all Americans.

Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH
Member of Congress