



June 18, 2009

The Honorable Edward Kennedy  
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi  
Ranking Member, Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chairman, Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher J. Dodd  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Children and  
Families  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Kennedy, Baucus and Dodd and Ranking Members Enzi and Grassley:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and its 25,000 contractors, subcontractors, material suppliers and construction related firms across the nation, we commend your efforts to attempt to improve our nation's troubled health care system. We recognize that this is a formidable task and are hopeful that we can work constructively to identify areas of common ground that will improve health care options for all Americans. However, ABC has grave concerns with the current proposal before your committees, "The Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009," as this proposal fails to provide employers and their employees with health care solutions that are practical or affordable.

While we recognize the need for reform, we feel as though it should be done responsibly. Providing quality health care benefits is a top priority for ABC and its member companies. The rapidly rising costs of health care and insurance premiums, limited access to health care, and the need for medical malpractice liability reform are all serious concerns that must be addressed by Congress. True reform must provide greater choice and affordability and should allow private insurers to compete for business.

The unique nature of construction demands that benefits be portable in order to reflect the reality of the industry workforce. It is important that reforms affecting employers who voluntarily provide and pay for insurance as a benefit to employees take into account the industry's fluctuating workforce. Such reforms must include expanded access, as well as affordable options that will accommodate the need for construction employees to move freely from job site to job site and across state lines for the duration of various projects.

ABC strongly opposes legislative proposals that seek to impose healthcare coverage mandates. A "pay or play" mandate that would force employers to provide health care or pay a hefty fine for not being able to do so would stifle small businesses, especially during this economic downturn. ABC also opposes a government run public plan option. Our members do not want to replace the health care they have with something inferior that costs trillions of dollars in taxes and debt. According to the Congressional Budget Office estimate, every additional insured person would cost taxpayers about \$6,250 per year.

ABC believes that health care is best administered on free market principles and we look forward to working with the HELP and Finance Committees towards legislation that best fits those principles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. G. Burr", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoffrey G. Burr  
Vice President, Government Affairs

CC: Members of the United States Senate