



KEY VOTE

March 16, 2010

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national association with 77 chapters representing 25,000 merit shop construction and construction-related firms with 2 million employees, we are writing to express our grave concerns with the Senate-passed version of the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (H.R. 3590) and the objectionable legislative processes being employed in order to intact this bill. The proposals included in this legislation impose vast new mandates on employers who are already struggling to survive in this economy, and furthermore they fail to provide employers and their employees with health care solutions that are practical or affordable. **Due to these concerns and those stated below, ABC strongly urges Representatives to oppose this legislation, in whatever form it is brought to the floor for a vote. ABC will consider these votes “KEY VOTES” for our 111th Congressional Scorecard.**

ABC strongly opposes any legislative proposal that would impose healthcare coverage mandates. A mandated level of coverage would directly result in premium increases making insurance more expensive for employers and employees. This bill will impose \$28 billion in new taxes on employers that do not provide government approved health plans. In the worst construction economy in decades, it is unfathomable that anyone could think this sort of vast financial imposition on employers is either prudent or viable.

Moreover, H.R. 3590 specifically singles out the construction industry by altering the small business exemption so that it applies only to those firms with at 5 employees or less—an extraordinary difference from the 50 employee threshold that every other American small business will enjoy. It is unconscionable that Congress is singling out an industry currently facing a 27 percent unemployment rate, the highest of any industry sector, by excluding them from small business exemptions.

Our nation cannot afford the enormous cost of this bill with some estimates placing the cost at \$2.5 trillion over 10 years of full implementation (2014-2023), and a very real possibility of a final dollar amount eclipsing what is estimated. If enacted, taxes are projected to increase by nearly half a trillion dollars, much of which will fall squarely on the shoulders of America’s small businesses.

Furthermore, we strongly oppose using the back door tactics known as reconciliation and the “Slaughter Rule” to pass such an expansive piece of legislation. Congress should be allowed to address each portion of this bill and be afforded the time to thoroughly debate the merits of the provisions contained within this legislation.

For years ABC has been a strong advocate for policies that would truly reduce the cost of healthcare for employers and employees. ABC believes medical malpractice reform must be included in any viable health care reform package. By enacting tort reform we will see a dramatic decrease in the cost of health insurance for the American public. In addition, ABC strongly supports the inclusion of Small Business Health Plans (SBHPs) in any health care reform measure. SBHPs would allow workers in small businesses and the self-employed to join together to obtain the same economies of scale,

purchasing clout, and administrative efficiencies from which employees of large employers and union sponsored plans currently benefit. The unique nature of construction demands that benefits be portable in order to reflect the reality of the industry workforce.

ABC believes that health care is best administered on free market principles and furthermore, we do not believe that enrolling millions more people in a broken healthcare system constitutes effective reform. We call on Congress to start over with a bi-partisan health care approach that will truly lower the cost of health care for the American people. ABC is vehemently opposed to the Senate-passed version of H.R. 3590 and will count votes on this legislation, including the rule, as “**KEY VOTES**” for our 111th Congressional Scorecard.

Sincerely,

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

Geoffrey Burr
Vice President, Federal Affairs
Associated Builders and Contractors