

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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July 17, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

In the current debate about our health care system, we are firmly committed to enactment of comprehensive reform this year. That reform must reduce premiums and administrative costs, expand choices, and increase coverage for all Americans. We are eager to work constructively with Senate leadership and agree that this is an historic opportunity which makes it imperative to proceed thoughtfully and responsibly. Our efforts will affect virtually every American.

The American people expect us to adopt comprehensive health reform that addresses the priorities we have outlined without detrimentally affecting those who have health insurance or increasing the national debt. This week, Congressional Budget Office Director Doug Elmendorf testified that the currently introduced health reform bills will not reduce costs. We are faced with the dual challenges of pressing ahead to pass legislation by the end of the year and to produce the reform the American people need.

We appreciate the work that has been done by Senators on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and Finance committees, but in view of the Budget Director's statement, there is much heavy lifting ahead. We support the efforts of Finance Committee members to produce a bipartisan bill, despite calls from both sides of the aisle to rush forward or delay indefinitely. While we are committed to providing relief for American families as quickly as possible, we believe taking additional time to achieve a bipartisan result is critical for legislation that affects 17 percent of our economy and every individual in the U.S.

We look forward to working with you to develop legislation that is vital to the well-being of the American people and urge you to resist timelines which prevent us from achieving the best result. This opportunity is rare and the impact will last for generations.


Sincerely,



E. Benjamin Nelson



Joseph I. Lieberman



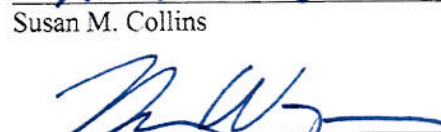
Mary L. Landrieu



Olympia J. Snowe



Susan M. Collins



Ron Wyden