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The Hon. Robert C. Byrd
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Sen. Byrd,

Though not a constituent I am a Democratic Party activist who worked hard to elect Democrats to all offices in 2008 partly because of the promise of comprehensive health care reform.

Please work with your fellow Democrats this autumn to enact legislation to extend health insurance to all Americans. You understand that to be effective there must be a strong public option. I mean by that an opportunity for me to compare a non-profit health insurance policy available through the federal government with policies offered by the private sector.

Without that competition any reform becomes meaningless. It will fail to rein in the rapid increase in health care costs that is distorting our national economy and is one of the major reasons health insurance reform is vital. In the last seven years (from 2002) premiums paid to U.S. health insurance companies rose 87%. In the same period profits of the top ten insurance companies rose 428%. It is significant that 70% of American families with health insurance declaring bankruptcy are forced to that extreme due to medical bills – bills denied for one reason or another by the health insurance companies that have happily cashed their monthly premium checks until the insurance is needed.

The American people deserve better. Please work to pass a bill before Christmas. Overcome obfuscation such as “co-ops,” unquestioned cost projections by the Congressional Budget Office and false offers from your Republican colleagues of “bipartisanship” that is meant to derail any meaningful reform.

Sincerely,

John Michael