# Congress of the United States
## Washington, DC 20515

July 16th, 2009

Chairman Charles Rangel
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Dave Camp
Committee on Ways and Means
1139E Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Henry Waxman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Joe Barton
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman George Miller
Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member John Kline
Committee on Education and Labor
2101 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel, Ranking Member Camp, Chairman Waxman, Ranking Member Barton, Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline:

We recognize that our country is facing a health care crisis and decisive action must be taken to fix our current system. Premiums for employer-sponsored family health coverage more than doubled from 2000 to 2008 and the average cost of an employer-based family insurance policy last year was $12,680. However, there have been many options on the table to pay for the various health care reform plans and it is imperative that our health care system reward – rather than rescind – the benefits of our nation's servicemembers and veterans. As Members of Congress, we implore you not to tax our service members and veterans in order to pay for health care reform.

Regardless of party affiliation, we all agree that we must take action to reform the way health care is delivered. Skyrocketing costs and declining access have placed a heavy burden on families who are working hard to stretch already thin budgets. The House committees of jurisdiction have introduced a health care reform bill, and the Senate committees are following suit. We are concerned about the potential negative effects of limiting the tax exclusion on health benefits. Our primary concern is the impact these proposals will have on America's veterans and servicemembers.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

We believe that any health reform legislation must be fully paid for. However, it is untenable to put these costs on the backs of our veterans and the men and women who are serving their country in the Armed Forces.

Our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are key components of our economic engine who lend their unique talents and experiences to drive this nation forward. A proposal to tax their health benefits could harm them and their families in unintended, extremely serious ways, jeopardizing their families' welfare and even negatively affecting their employment opportunities. If our economy is to be strong, then we must rely on the strength of the tens of millions of servicemembers and veterans who defend our nation.

We therefore appeal that any health care reform policy considered by Congress respect the integrity of TRICARE and VA health care benefits and does not impose any additional taxes on or associated with these benefits. Any proposal that taxes the benefits of our men and women who served in uniform is not reform at all, and is something we cannot support.

If we are to continue to rely on veterans to drive our economy forward and lead our country toward recovery, we must protect their benefits as we work to protect the health of the American people. We look forward to working with you to author a health care package that is accessible and affordable for all Americans, especially our brave servicemembers and veterans.

Sincerely,

Glenn Nye
Member of Congress

Steve Buyer
Member of Congress

Gerry Connolly
Member of Congress

Ciro Rodriquez
Member of Congress

Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress

Ginny Brown-Waite
Member of Congress

Rick Boucher
Member of Congress

Henry E. Brown
Member of Congress

Dan Burton
Member of Congress

Mike Michaud
Member of Congress

Rodney Alexander
Member of Congress

Joe Pitts
Member of Congress

Don Young
Member of Congress

Allen Boyd
Member of Congress

Gene Taylor
Member of Congress

Frank M. Kratovil
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Tom Cole
Member of Congress

Harry Teague
Member of Congress

Tom Latham
Member of Congress

Randy Forbes
Member of Congress

Zach Wamp
Member of Congress

Jerry Moran
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

Bart Stupak
Member of Congress

Madeleine Bordallo
Member of Congress

John Shimkus
Member of Congress

Tom Rooney
Member of Congress

Roscoe Bartlett
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Rob Wittman
Member of Congress

James McGovern
Member of Congress

Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Walter Minnick
Member of Congress

Solomon Ortiz
Member of Congress

Debbie Halvorson
Member of Congress

Mike Simpson
Member of Congress

Cliff Stearns
Member of Congress

Gary Peters
Member of Congress