NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
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Great Public Schools for Every Student

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November 4, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

The National Education Assocication (NEA) representing 3.2 million educators across the nation, is pleased to offer our support for H.R. 3962, the "Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009." We offer our congratulations to you and your colleagues for developing what many thought was nearly impossible—comprehensive, quality health care reform that is affordable and will cover nearly all Americans without taxing benefits.

Ensuring quality, affordable health care for everyone in America is fundamental not only to our economic future but also critically important to our nation's children and their families. Students can't learn unless they come to school healthy. NEA members know firsthand that the lack of necessary medical and dental services for children and students of all ages creates a serious impediment to the learning process. In addition, families with access to a regular source of medical care are more likely to keep the entire family healthy and create a better learning environment within the home.

We are very pleased that H.R. 3962 would provide more affordable, quality coverage for all, call for shared responsibility by individuals, employers and government, and expand health insurance coverage choices, including being able to retain one's current coverage, have additional private plan options, and a public health insurance option designed to lower costs and keep insurance companies honest. We strongly support the provisions in the bill that make health insurance and health care services more affordable. In particular, premium assistance, reduced cost-sharing, and application of an out-of-pocket cap are central to making health care accessible to low and middle income individuals and families.

For millions of Americans, affordable coverage is secured through the workplace. We strongly support the provisions that retain and strengthen the provision of employer-sponsored insurance and extend this responsibility across a broader spectrum of employers. Also, we commend you for your leadership in extending assistance in purchasing health insurance to working families through the exchange, including the option of a public health insurance option that would be available nationally on Day One.

Finally, the progressive financing provisions in the bill are central to ensuring that middle income families do not take on an even greater burden for securing comprehensive health insurance coverage for their families. Together, these provisions are vital to ensuring that persons in all corners of our country are able to afford health insurance and to readily access health care services.

We are proud to extend our support for this legislation, and we look forward to working with you and other leaders in Congress and the Administration to enact comprehensive health care reform into law this year.

Sincerely,

Diane Shust

Diane Shust
Director of Government Relations

Randall Moody
Manager of Federal Advocacy