

The Fairfax County Democratic Committee Unanimously Endorses Health Care Reform that Includes a Comprehensive Public Option Similar to Medicare

Whereas, health care is a moral issue; President Obama said, “ I think it should be a right for every American,” and Senator Ted Kennedy said, “We will...guarantee that every American...will have decent, quality health care as a fundamental right and not just a privilege”; and

Whereas, the 2008 Democratic Party platform called for guaranteed healthcare for all; the nation overwhelmingly elected President Obama and Democratic majorities to Congress with a mandate to deliver healthcare for all; FCDC members, other Virginia Democrats, and thousands of new volunteers gave their time, resources and trust to mandate Democratic candidates to fulfill this promise; and

Whereas, 14,000 Americans lose their health insurance every day; approximately one million Virginians lacked health insurance in 2007, and the economic downturn has driven those numbers far higher today; over the last nine years premiums have gone up four times faster than family incomes; health care costs cause a bankruptcy in America every 30 seconds; 62.1% of all bankruptcies in 2007 were medical; most medical debtors were well educated, owned homes, and had middle-class occupations; three-quarters of the medically bankrupt were insured, but their coverage was insufficient to protect them from financial collapse; half of American families are rationing medical care because they can't afford it, and within a decade, one out of every four dollars we earn will be spent on health care; and

Whereas, rationing health care according to ability to pay has diminished the overall health of our citizens to the point that, in comparison to other nations, the United States has been ranked thirty-six in quality by the World Health Organization; and

Whereas, skyrocketing health care costs are contributing to the current economic crisis, weighing heavily on American family, business, and government budgets; health care reform is economic reform because the economy is an integrated system that includes health care, and to help restore our economy and secure our nation's fiscal future real health care reform is essential; and

Whereas, President Obama has repeatedly stated ...”that one of the best ways to bring down costs, provide more choices and ensure quality is a Public Option that will force the insurance companies to compete and keep them honest.”; and

Whereas, former Governor Howard Dean said, “ Medicare is cheaper, it is more efficient and a far smaller percentage of dollars that goes into it is spent on non-health-care items. It's about five times as expensive to insure yourself with a private health insurance than it is with Medicare. So that's what the Public Option looks like...”; and

Whereas, administrative costs for Medicare total around 3%; private health insurers spend 15%-20% on the administration of their plans (campaign contributions, underwriting, billing, sales, marketing, advertising, lobbyist and executive salaries, corporate profits), evincing the inefficiency of such systems in contrast to a comprehensive Public Option similar to Medicare; and

Whereas, if US private insurer costs aren't constrained, private insurance premiums for employer-sponsored coverage are projected to rise 94% by 2020; these swelling private insurance premiums for employer-sponsored coverage reduce American business's competitiveness in the international marketplace, particularly among other industrialized nations whose citizens enjoy universal health care and whose employers don't have to subtract ever-increasing employee premium contributions from their bottom line; and

Whereas, lack of competition is a major source of the United States' uniquely high and rising health costs; a comprehensive Public Option will persuade private insurers to compete more on efficiency and quality, compelling reductions in their administrative costs, and reining in the ballooning growth in overall health care costs; and

Whereas, Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analyses show that offering a strong, comprehensive Public Option as well as private plans through a health coverage exchange will help all Americans, not just the uninsured, by slowing the growth in premiums; and a recent Commonwealth Fund analysis found that offering a comprehensive Public Option alongside private plans to all individuals and employers is our most effective weapon in combating health costs, resulting in a savings as high as \$3 Trillion between 2010-2020; and a comprehensive Public Option is the fiscally responsible option; and

Whereas, a comprehensive Public Option would also ensure health care coverage that is portable and available nationwide, regardless of employment status or preexisting medical conditions, while preserving choice of doctors and plans; and

Whereas, in the August, 2009 edition of the Kaiser Health Care Tracking poll, 59 percent of Americans favor “creating a government-administered public health insurance option similar to Medicare to compete with private health insurance plans”; and the American people should be allowed the freedom to choose between a comprehensive Public Option like Medicare or private insurance; and

Whereas, courageous Democratic Senators and Representatives have proposed legislation, including a comprehensive Public Option similar to Medicare, that would provide universal health care coverage and control costs; and

Whereas, there must be a comprehensive Public Option like Medicare in any health reform bill passed this year because providing subsidies for private insurance alone is not true health reform, as that would perpetuate unaffordable monthly premiums, unacceptably high deductibles, crushing co-pays, medical debt, bankruptcy, and denials of care.

Therefore, Be it Resolved that the Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) unanimously endorses Health Care Reform that includes a comprehensive Public Option similar to Medicare; and

Therefore, Be it Further Resolved that FCDC expects every Democratic member of the Virginia delegation to Congress to actively support health care reform legislation that includes a comprehensive Public Option similar to Medicare.