

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3518

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEES:
HEALTH
COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY
AND THE INTERNET
COMMERCE, TRADE AND
CONSUMER PROTECTIONS
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE:
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

October 29, 2009

Dear 

Thank you for contacting me with your opposition to comprehensive health reform legislation before the House of Representatives. I appreciate the benefit of your perspective.

Our nation's system of health care is in dire need of reform. According to the Congressional Budget Office, by 2050, health care spending as a percentage of GDP will double to 31% by 2035, and continue to climb to 35% by 2050. This spending will continue to grow at rapid rates unless Congress acts to make comprehensive changes to our nation's system of health care delivery.

However, I share your concern about Congress acting improperly. The answer to health care spending is not additional reckless spending, nor is it unneeded government control of a system that offers quality health care through private health insurance plans. Health reform legislation must seize upon what is good about market forces, while weeding out the bad.

Earlier this year, my colleagues in the House of Representatives released a discussion draft of health reform legislation that intended to make the very changes I discussed. Unfortunately, the authors drafted a bill that did not make sense for the residents of rural Ohio. The legislation spent too much taxpayer money for too little return on the system.

That's why I joined six of my colleagues in the conservative Blue Dog coalition from preventing the bill from moving forward. Despite intense pressure from Congressional leadership and the White House, my moderate allies stood firm and refused to allow the bill to move through the House Committee on Energy and Commerce until it had been radically changed.

The concessions we won were significant. First and foremost, we prevented the legislation from moving through the House of Representatives before the August district

work period, giving our constituents additional time to review the legislation and provide advice. In creating legislation of this magnitude, this time and input is invaluable.

Second, we saved our rural hospitals from potential closure. My district is home to 13 hospitals, all of which struggle each year to keep their doors open because they treat a higher number of patients who depend on Medicare or Medicaid, patients on which hospitals lose money. My changes to the bill ensured these hospitals could stay open, remaining critical care centers and robust employers in our region.

Third, we protected Ohio's small businesses from burdensome requirements that would have forced many of them to lay off workers or close altogether. By expanding by 500% the exemption from the requirement of employers to offer insurance, we ensured over 75% of the nation's small businesses would not have to provide expensive health insurance to their employees.

Finally, my colleagues and I cut from the cost of the bill over \$100 billion. This \$100 billion is revenue that will be kept in taxpayer pockets, right where it belongs.

My vote to allow the process to move forward was not a final seal of approval; it was the first step in a long process forward. Please know that I will be vigilant in protecting the interests of rural Ohioans as the process continues.

Thanks again for taking the time to get involved. Please don't hesitate to contact me again in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zack Space", written in a cursive style.

Zack Space
Member of Congress

P.S. If you'd like to stay informed about what's going on in Congress, please visit my website at www.space.house.gov and sign up for my e-newsletter.

ZS/rm