



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Joseph M. Stanton
Chief Lobbyist

July 23, 2008

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
Chairwoman
Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez,

On behalf of the 235,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I would like to thank you for crafting and introducing the "*Small Business Cooperatives for Healthcare Options to Improve Coverage for Employees (CHOICE) Act of 2008.*"

Day in and day out, we hear from our members about the rapidly rising cost of health insurance and the increasingly frequent loss of access to coverage because local small group market providers will no longer cover small businesses. Although many builders offer some type of health insurance to their employees, these employers are finding it increasingly difficult to provide coverage at an affordable price, and ultimately, this additional cost is passed on to home buyers.

The CHOICE Act gives small employers a vehicle to join together and access excess claim coverage, thereby lowering costs and stabilizing annual insurance premiums. The CHOICE Act also offers a targeted tax credit to encourage small businesses to join a cooperative, aiding our members in affording comprehensive health coverage for themselves and their employees.

We support the introduction of the CHOICE Act in the hope that it can be a starting point for serious discussions on significant small business health care legislation. We look forward to working with you to bring common sense reform to health insurance, and give small businesses equal footing to obtain stable, affordable, and quality health insurance coverage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. M. Stanton".

Joseph M. Stanton