

PRESS RELEASE
THE HONORABLE CORRINE BROWN
THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

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Congresswoman Brown Strongly Supports Health Care Reform: 75 Years in the Making

(Washington, D.C.) Congresswoman Brown made the following statement:

Congresswoman Corrine Brown, a staunch supporter of health care reform and representative of a district (Florida's third) in which 26% of her constituents are without health insurance, is extremely pleased to see that House Democrats are closing in on passing health care reform legislation. The Congresswoman believes that "this plan is good for America since it will put Americans back in control of their health care choices, hold insurance companies accountable, and make coverage more affordable. In fact, not only will Americans who are uninsured because of a pre-existing condition be able to buy affordable coverage through a temporary high-risk pool, but insurers will be banned from denying coverage based on a pre-existing condition. In addition, Insurance companies will be prohibited from dropping people when they get sick, seniors' prescription drug costs will go down, federal assistance for Medicaid will increase, and the "donut hole" in the Medicare prescription drug program will finally close."

The Congresswoman continued: "one area like I would like to focus on is the importance of health insurance coverage for our nation's women. For the many women who cannot get insurance coverage because they have a pre-existing health condition (insurance companies often consider women as a group to have a pre-existing condition by the mere fact of being a woman), to the woman who lost her health insurance because her husband lost his job, passed away, or got divorced and she was included in his plan, to the many single mothers who do not earn enough to support their family and purchase health insurance, or the numerous women who are victims of domestic violence and still denied coverage, health care reform is an absolute necessity.

Women in our nation also face unfair insurance industry practices, have trouble affording necessary care, or struggle to find insurance that covers the benefits that cover their special needs. In my state of Florida, like in most states across the country, because women on average do not earn as much as men and utilize the health care system more often, they end up spending a greater share of their income on health needs. In fact, one in five women in Florida reports not visiting a doctor because of the terribly high costs, and nearly one in four women in the state is uninsured.

One instance in which the need for health care reform become crystal clear to me was the time I went to a hospital in Jacksonville to visit a friend. This friend, who had worked in the Duval County school system for over 25 years, quit his job, and as a result, was without health

insurance. And because he was diabetic, one day his blood sugar level spiked and he ended up in an intensive care unit of the emergency room. Now who is paying for his hospital visit? The American taxpayer! That bill is not just being written off somewhere. Another example is my former scheduler, Ms. Darla Smallwood-Wran, who recently passed away from an extremely invasive form of breast cancer. Fortunately, Darla had health care insurance, and was able to obtain quality medical care, yet what would have happened to her if she had been without health insurance? She very likely would not have received treatment at all, or not until the very last minute. One last example was the woman who called into my Tele-town hall meeting on health care. The woman had left her job to take care of her mother for years, yet during this time, she became ill herself and lost her employer sponsored health insurance.

Indeed, the cost of inaction is too great for our nation. For too long, health care has been a privilege, not a right in America. And for years our nation's leaders have fought to bring the promise of quality, affordable health care to every American. Yet we are now closer than ever to guaranteeing every American access to quality, affordable health insurance and giving middle-class families and businesses relief from crushing costs, while simultaneously reducing our nation's deficit."

Indeed, access to and affordable health care is something which unquestionably needs to be implemented:

"And in 1945, Harry Truman said, 'Millions of our citizens do not now have a full measure of opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health The time,' he said, 'has arrived for action to help them attain that opportunity and that protection.'

"Dwight David Eisenhower, in 1955, said, 'Clearly our nation must do more to reduce the impact of accident and disease. Two fundamental problems confront us: first, high and ever-rising costs of health services; second, serious gaps and shortages in these services.' So said Dwight Eisenhower in 1955.

"John F. Kennedy said, in 1962, 'Whenever the miracles of modern medicine are beyond the reach of any group of Americans, for whatever reason--economic, geographic, occupational or other--we must find a way to meet their needs and fulfill their hopes.'

"Gerald Ford, in 1974, said, 'Let us affirm that this national legislation is only the beginning of our effort to upgrade and perpetuate this part of our total health care system so no individual in this country,' said President Ford, 'will lack help whenever or wherever he needs it.'

"[Jimmy Carter, in 1979,] said, 'A universal, comprehensive, national health insurance program is one of the major unfinished items on America's social agenda. The American people,' he said in 1992, 'have waited too long.'

"Bill Clinton said, 'The time has come to pull together and work in a bipartisan manner to deliver guaranteed health care coverage to all Americans.'

“George W. Bush, in 2002, said and I quote, ‘All Americans should be able to choose a health care plan that meets their needs at affordable prices.’

Link to former President’s statements on the necessity of healthcare overhaul:

<http://www.dems.gov/blog/president-speaks-to-house-democrats-on-the-eve-of-historic-health-care-vote>