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### **Statement by SEIU Secretary-Treasurer Anna Burger on the AmeriCare Health Care Act**

“The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) applauds Congressman Pete Stark for his leadership in introducing the AmeriCare Health Care Act of 2006 today. The AmeriCare Health Care Act of 2006 stands in stark contrast to the thousands of incremental health care proposals and bills introduced in Congress every day that tinker around the edges and don’t solve the deep, worsening, and fundamental problems with our health care system.

“AmeriCare would cover every resident of the U.S., and would require shared responsibility from employers, individuals, and government to pay for benefits that are portable, comprehensive, and affordable. AmeriCare would build on the Medicare program – a program in which almost every hospital and physician participates – and provide patients with choice of doctor.

“AmeriCare would relieve state governments from the double-digit annual health care increases they face in managing their Medicaid budgets, and allow governors and state legislators to focus on modernizing and rebalancing the system of long-term care and supports for the elderly and people with disabilities. AmeriCare says to American employers: instead of shouldering the ever-growing burden of health insurance plans and products with their complex rules, regulations, benefit designs, and provider networks, you can focus on your core business and simply pay your fair share of the premiums on behalf of your workforce.

“Like Medicare, AmeriCare will offer a high national standard of care while also supporting the unique health delivery systems in different regional and local areas. AmeriCare also allows employers to continue to provide employer-based health insurance, if they choose, as long as that coverage meets certain minimum standards.

“SEIU challenges business leaders, health care providers, members of Congress, governors, and aspiring presidential candidates to step forward and support Congressman Stark’s AmeriCare plan. It’s time to engage in a new national conversation to fix our broken health care system so that it works again for working families and allows our employers to compete in a global economy. Congressman Stark’s AmeriCare proposal lays down an important marker for that national conversation to begin in earnest and in good faith.”

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