

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 9, 2012

Governor Scott Walker  
115 East Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker:

As you know, the deadline for your decision regarding the implementation of state-based health insurance exchange is quickly approaching. Recent media reports indicate you have not yet decided whether to proceed with a state-based exchange. We write asking that you indeed move forward by creating an exchange that builds off the unique strengths of our Wisconsin health care system and is tailored to meet the needs of Wisconsin consumers.

Health care reform provides for state-based health insurance exchanges that allow small businesses, family farmers, and individuals to pool their purchasing power to find quality, affordable health care. Exchanges create a marketplace that allow consumers to comparison shop among a variety of plans and prices, giving all Americans access to the same type of quality, affordable coverage that is now often available only to large employers. Based on the SHOP Act, authored by Rep. Kind, exchanges have long received strong bipartisan support because they are transparent, consumer-friendly, and operate on free market principles.

Exchanges allow each state to establish unique marketplaces to meet the preferences of its consumers. We believe that is the best course to pursue: an exchange designed by Wisconsinites to meet the unique needs of Wisconsin. We need to do it the Wisconsin way. With one of the strongest health care systems in the country, Wisconsin is uniquely positioned to manage its own insurance marketplace. Unfortunately, if your administration chooses to pass the responsibility to operate our exchange to the federal government, important decisions will be made in Washington instead of in Wisconsin. Ceding control of the exchange to the federal government now would have long-term consequences. Should state leaders ever want to establish an exchange, relinquishing control to the federal government now would make it much more difficult to pursue state adoption in the future.

As you know, the state also has the option of a “partnership”, with the state assuming some day-to-day responsibilities within a federally-facilitated exchange. This option could prove worthwhile should you choose not to pursue a fully state-run exchange.

Wisconsin has been through substantial political turmoil in the last few years. Wisconsinites want both parties to put aside our differences and start working together. Other Republican governors have started working on exchanges in their states and we write urging you to do the same. If your administration acts now, there is still time for the state to play a role in the exchange that Wisconsinites will use in 2014.

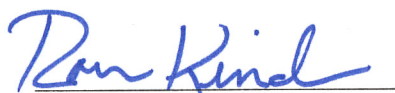
With President Obama's reelection and a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate, it is clear that the health care reform will continue to be fully implemented. The state faces a deadline as early as December 14 to notify the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on how the Wisconsin exchange will operate. We hope to have an opportunity to work together with you on this issue and we respectfully request that you not ask for an extension in announcing your decision. We again urge you to ensure the state plays a role in operating the exchange. It's the best decision for Wisconsin consumers, businesses, and families.

Now is the time to work together to ensure we have a health insurance exchange created by Wisconsinites to meet the specific needs of our state.

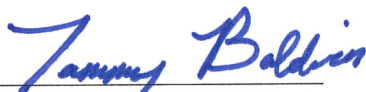
Sincerely,



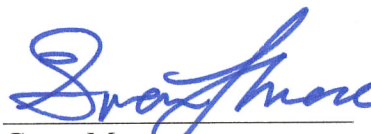
Herb Kohl  
Senator



Ron Kind  
Representative



Tammy Baldwin  
Senator-Elect



Gwen Moore  
Representative



Mark Pocan  
Representative-Elect