

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 17, 2009

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

We write to you concerning your recent comments about the public option in health insurance reform.

We stand in strong opposition to your statement that the public option is “not the essential element” of comprehensive reform. The opportunity to improve access to healthcare is a onetime opportunity. Americans deserve reform that is real—not smoke and mirrors. We cannot rely solely on the insurance companies’ good faith efforts to provide for our constituents. A robust public option is essential, if we are to ensure that all Americans can receive healthcare that is accessible, guaranteed and of high-quality.

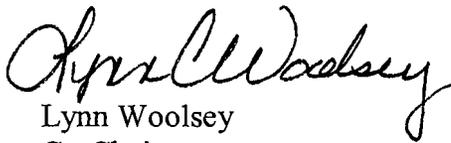
To take the public option off the table would be a grave error; passage in the House of Representatives depends upon inclusion of it.

We have attached, for your review, a letter from 60 Members of Congress who are firm in their Position that any legislation that moves forward through both chambers, and into a final proposal for the President’s signature, MUST contain a public option.

Sincerely,



Raul Grijalva
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus



Lynn Woolsey
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus



Barbara Lee
Chair
Congressional Black Caucus