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Congress of the United States

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March 19, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the United States House of Representatives
H-230, The U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
House Democratic Majority Leader
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer,

This is a critical moment in our nation's history. We are on the threshold of enacting legislation that will reduce skyrocketing health insurance premiums, provide coverage to 32 million Americans, and reduce our budget deficit by \$138 billion over the next ten years. Achieving these three goals will be a tremendous benefit to families, seniors and small businesses in my state and across our nation. In Arizona specifically, tax credits will be available to 176,000 families and 13,4000 small businesses to help them afford coverage.

Yet, anxiety is running high around the country. A debate about the process has arisen that threatens to overshadow the necessity and merit of health insurance reform legislation. I am writing to urge that the upcoming floor procedures be entirely open and transparent. Specifically:

- The vote should be a straight up or down vote on the content of the bill, not a "deem and pass" legislative alternative.
- No legislation should be debated on or voted on in the very late night or early morning hours.
- Finally, the time allowed for members to record their votes should not be extended endlessly.

On Thursday, I was among 203 members of the House to oppose a procedural motion allowing the House to use the controversial “deem and pass” approach to considering health insurance reform legislation. My constituents believe, and I agree, that any vote to “deem” the health insurance reform legislation passed is simply a vote for the legislation. If members feel opposed to the legislation, they should vote that way.

The President made his views on this procedure clear in a March 17, 2010 interview with Fox News, “What I can tell you is that the vote that's taken in the House will be a vote for health care reform. And if people vote yes, whatever form that takes, that is going to be a vote for health care reform. And I don't think we should pretend otherwise.”

While I will ultimately cast my vote based on the substance of this legislation, I urge you to act to ensure this legislation is brought to vote under regular order of the House.

Sincerely yours,



Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress