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Senator Matt Rector Part of D.C. Delegation Representing Over 1000 State Legislators Supporting Robust Health Care Reform

Delegation to Capitol Hill and White House representing 1057 legislators from all fifty states demonstrates overwhelming support for health care reform, including a public insurance option

WASHINGTON, D.C. - On October 13-14, Senator Matt Rector will join other state legislators representing over 1000 colleagues, along with mayors from around the country, in bringing the message to Capitol Hill and the White House of broad-based support in the states for real health care reform, including the public insurance option.

“State leaders are bringing the message to D.C. that federal health care reform assuring quality, affordable health care for all, including a public insurance option, is critical,” said Senator Matt Rector.

This D.C. delegation follows the release last week by Progressive States Network, a group representing state legislators across the country, that 1,057 state legislators from all 50 states have signed letters to Congress asking for real health reform, including a public health insurance option, strong affordability protections, and shared responsibility among individuals, employers and government for health care costs.

In addition to these letters showing broad-based state legislator support for reform, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in August voted to support federal health care reform, including a public health insurance option. The vote at the annual NCSL conference was overwhelming, with representatives of 38 states supporting the resolution. As Iowa State Senator Jack Hatch (D, Des Moines), who introduced the NCSL amendment, said at the time, “We sent a very clear message to people dragging their feet in Washington: the time to act on health reform is now. We need a public health insurance option to make sure working families and small businesses are free to choose the best health care available at a price they can afford.”

The state leaders coming to D.C. are delivering a few key messages to Capitol Hill and the White House during their meetings, including:

- **Any federal law should create a “floor, not a ceiling” for reform**, where states will retain the authority to provide stronger consumer protections, coverage expansions, and industry and medical standards than what it is enacted by Congress
- **Ensure reform is sustainable during all economic conditions** and provide states with the necessary financial resources to provide health care for all during economic downturns.

- **Guarantee affordability of coverage for all families**, including limiting costs to an affordable percentage of income for all families and **providing a public insurance option** to provide lower-cost alternatives.

“State legislators have been on the front lines of health care reform for decades,” said Texas Representative Garnet Coleman, co-chair of Progressive States Network. “Most proposed elements of federal reform are based on ideas already debated and in many cases enacted in the states. So state legislators know what is needed to make reform work.”

The list of 1057 legislators supporting reform reflects 943 legislators signing a letter to Congress and President Obama sponsored by Progressive States Network itself, along with two separate letters from legislators in the states of Connecticut (92 additional names) and New Mexico (25 additional names) reflecting advocacy of similar reforms.

A full copy of the PSN letter with all signers, along with links to the New Mexico and Connecticut letters, can be obtained at <http://progressivestates.org/statefedhealth>.

The text of the PSN letter was developed in consultation with national health care reform advocates, including the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, Community Catalyst, Families USA, Herndon Alliance, National Women's Law Center, Northeast Action, SEIU, and Universal Health Care Action Network.

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