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Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

November 2, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

We urge you to allow Members of Congress and the public to review an estimate of the financial effects of any proposed health care legislation, prepared by the Office of the Actuary (OACT) for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), for at least 72 hours prior to a House vote.

Health care accounts for 17% of the U.S. economy. The upcoming vote on a health care overhaul will be one of the most important votes ever cast, not only for those Members currently serving but also in the entire history of this Chamber. It is imperative that Members and their constituents have access to reliable, nonpartisan information about how the proposed bill will affect the federal budget, premiums for health coverage, and overall spending on health care.

OACT is responsible for estimating “the financial effects of proposals to create national health insurance systems” and is the only nonpartisan government office capable of estimating changes in national spending on health care resulting from proposed legislation. While the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) develops critically important analyses of a proposal’s impact on the federal budget, CBO is limited in its ability to evaluate the effect on national health expenditures. Because of this, public access to OACT’s analysis is essential. During past health care debates, leading Democrats have asserted the importance of OACT estimates. In reference to the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA), Representative Charles Rangel, then the Ranking Member on the Ways and Means Committee, stated, “There is a need that we have integrity with professional actuaries and that they can report the information as needed, not wanted, by the Congress.”

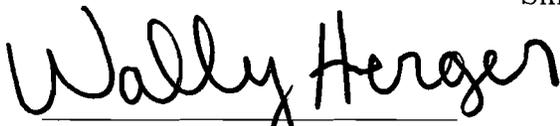
President Obama and members of his administration have repeatedly expressed their belief that health reform should “bend the cost curve” by reducing future growth in national health care spending. However, an OACT analysis of H.R. 3200, as reported by the House Ways and Means Committee on July 17, would increase national health expenditures by an estimated \$750 billion over the next 10 years. Thus, this version of the legislation would have completely

failed to achieve one of the primary objectives for health reform identified by the Obama Administration and Democrats in Congress.

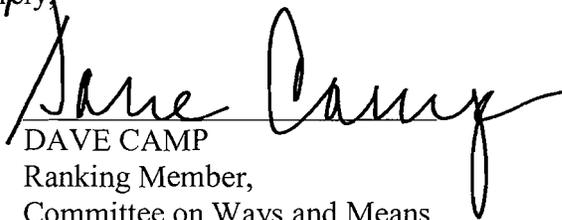
On October 29, House Democratic leaders released the text of H.R. 3962, the “Affordable Health Care for America Act.” This legislation, written behind closed doors with no opportunity for input from the Republican minority, incorporates a number of significant policy changes and runs to nearly 2,000 pages – almost twice as long as the original version of H.R. 3200. While we appreciate the Majority’s commitment to comply with House rules requiring the bill text to be publicly available for at least 72 hours before voting, the American people also deserve to see a reputable, nonpartisan analysis of how this bill will affect their health care and the economic future of their country.

When considering legislation that will forever alter our economy and health care in the United States, we must ensure that the American people have a chance to share their views. Therefore, we urge you to delay consideration of H.R. 3962, or any related health care legislation, until the CMS Office of the Actuary has made its estimate of such legislation publicly available for 72 hours. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

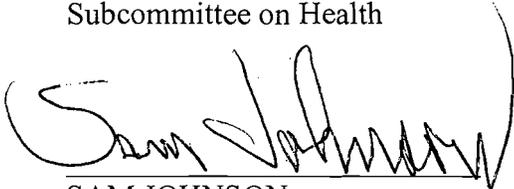
Sincerely,



WALLY HERGER
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Health



DAVE CAMP
Ranking Member,
Committee on Ways and Means



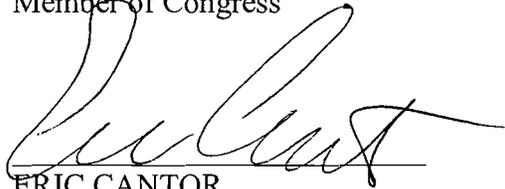
SAM JOHNSON
Member of Congress



KEVIN BRADY
Member of Congress



PAUL RYAN
Member of Congress



ERIC CANTOR
Republican Whip



JOHN LINDER
Member of Congress



DEVIN NUNES
Member of Congress



PATRICK TIBERI
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GINNY BROWN-WAITE
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GEOFF DAVIS
Member of Congress



DAVE REICHERT
Member of Congress



CHARLES BOUSTANY
Member of Congress



DEAN HELLER
Member of Congress



PETER ROSKAM
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