United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 22, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Dodd
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
429 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Chairman Baucus, and Senator Dodd:

As you know, we proudly represent states that have taken the initiative to expand Medicaid through waiver programs and independent state funding. This investment has helped millions of Americans access the health care they need. We strongly support your efforts to expand Medicaid to provide health care to more low-income Americans; however, we are disappointed that current health reform legislation disproportionately burdens our states, simply because we are leaders in expanding health care coverage for our low-income residents.

Our states respectfully submit the following language for your consideration, which would address the disparity in federal assistance to "expansion state" Medicaid programs under current health reform legislation. This language would provide for a three percentage point increase in each state's Federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) beginning in fiscal year 2010, so long as the state is deemed an "expansion state" and meets other eligibility requirements.

While we appreciate the shared state and federal responsibility for funding Medicaid, the fiscal hardship our states have faced in recent years will only be exacerbated by the Medicaid expansion provisions in S. 1796, the "America's Healthy Future Act of 2009." This investment is one our states are proud of, and was the right thing to do. But now, our constituents' tax dollars will not only go to sustaining our own state programs, but will also go to states around the country that have consistently ignored the health care needs of their low-income residents without any acknowledgement of our original investment. That is unacceptable.

We share the same goal of increasing access to health coverage through state Medicaid programs, particularly focusing on states that currently have limited access to Medicaid programs. We are concerned that current language would disproportionately harm our "leading" state Medicaid programs. We respectfully request that you consider the potential harm of the

Medicaid expansion in S. 1796 for our states and consider our proposed language. We stand ready to work with you on this important policy.

Sincerely,

Russell D. Feingold
United States Senate

Herb Kohl
United States Senate

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate

Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senate

United States Senate

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