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Dear Friends,

As you may be aware, Congress has begun to debate health insurance reform and may have a vote on a reform bill as early as the end of July. Currently, there is a bill being processed in the U.S. House of Representatives, H.R. 3200, the America's Affordable Health Choices Act, and there are two bills making their way through the U.S. Senate. While I continue to review these proposals, you, too, can read these bills in their current forms [here](#).

As I meet with people throughout the district, it seems that everyone has a personal story about health care. Like most Americans, I believe that rising costs and the threat of losing coverage is cause for great concern. There are too many examples of folks being denied the care their doctor prescribes because their insurance company says no, or of businesses being unable to create more jobs because the cost of health insurance will bust their budget, or of parents who cannot afford to pay for routine medical treatment to keep themselves and their children healthy.

Those conversations, along with recommendations received from doctors, nurses, patients, and health care providers in Arizona have convinced me that our system needs reform. In fact, since 2000, health care premiums have more than doubled and small businesses have faced a [129 percent increase in health care costs](#).

Let me be clear, I believe reform needs to protect what works and fix what doesn't. Reform should not only improve access to affordable and quality care for all Americans, but it also needs to preserve individual choice and protect competition in the marketplace. Reform should not leave individuals with fewer options, should not add to the national deficit, and should not leave doctors with inconsistent and low reimbursement rates as is often the case with Medicare.

While content of H.R. 3200, the America's Affordable Choices Act, continues to be amended in committee, I will be reviewing and monitoring changes before I decide whether I will support this legislation. However, there are important benchmarks that should be met in order to gain my support:

- **Choice:** Reform must preserve patient choice. You should be able to choose your own coverage and doctors. If you like them you should be able to keep them, even if you change or lose your job or move to a new state. And you should be free to change coverage as you see fit.
- **Competition:** Reform should encourage competition and should not leave individuals with fewer options. In its current form, H.R. 3200 contains a public alternative that is funded at the same rate of Medicare which is troubling for patients, doctors, and hospitals alike. For example, in 2008, Scottsdale Healthcare lost \$56 million in Medicare underpayments. While a public alternative, if designed carefully and properly, may help increase competition, one that reimburses according to Medicare rates could undercut private plans, weaken the financial stability of local hospitals and potentially leave individuals with fewer options.
- **Small business:** Reform must not overburden small businesses that create jobs that are essential in jump starting Arizona's economy. According to The Arizona Republic, while small businesses make up 73 percent of Arizona businesses, only 32 percent of Arizona small businesses provided health coverage benefits in 2006, down from 50 percent in 2000. Health care reform should not exacerbate the problems small businesses are currently facing.
- **Affordability, wellness, technology and best practices:** Reform should ensure that our health care system is affordable and covers pre-existing conditions. To ensure the highest quality of care for all Americans, reform should reward healthy lifestyles and personal responsibility, and take full advantage of technological advances and best practices that will help reduce costs for doctors, hospitals, and insurance companies.

Finally, I also believe that in the long term reform should not add to the national deficit. I believe that much of the cost of instituting reform should come from savings within the current system, by eliminating waste and inefficiencies, yet there may likely be the need find additional revenue sources to pay for it. As a member of Congress with a strong record of opposing tax increases, I will closely watch the debate on paying for reform.

As the debate in Congress continues, I value your input and ideas. I encourage you to [visit my healthcare resource page](#) on my website to receive more information about the health care reform process and invite you to [contact my office](#) to share your story and opinion.

Sincerely,

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