

Missouri Budget Project E-News
Federal Policy Update and ACTION ALERT
February 26, 2010

Today's update focuses on federal policy issues. An update of state policy issues will follow on Monday.

Health care reform. What's next? What can we do?

President Obama convened a televised/streamed health care summit on Thursday, February 25. Prior to the summit he released his plan for health care reform.

The President's plan basically builds on the Senate plan, offering a compromise on some of the House and Senate differences (such as affordability of premiums and limits for out of pocket costs for lower income families), and offering some new ideas as well. For a summary of the key elements of his plan click [here](#).

The most likely way that reform will happen is for the House to pass the Senate bill. Changes to the Senate bill will then likely be made through the budget reconciliation process. Some in the minority party are arguing that the budget reconciliation is not a valid way to pass health care reform. In reality, many major legislative packages have been passed through the budget reconciliation process under both Democratic and Republican administration. Some examples are welfare reform in 1997 during the Clinton administration, numerous tax cuts during the Bush administration, and the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization in 2009.

While the time frame for next steps is unclear at this time, it is important that we keep the pressure on Congress to move forward with comprehensive health care reform.

Many of you have made many calls to our Congressional delegation over the past months. Please help us push through to the finish line. Why should you make another call?

Do it for Melanie – a small business owner who died from breast cancer because she couldn't afford health insurance and put off going to the doctor

Do it for Julie- who had good insurance until she became too sick to work and lost her job and, with it, her insurance. The year before she died was filled with worry about how to pay her medical bills without losing her house.

Do it for David – a small business owner who wants to do the right thing and offer insurance to his 3 employees. His premiums are high because he has heart problems and two of his employees are women of child bearing age. He works about 30 hours each month just to pay for health insurance

Do it Terri- who lived in agony while her insurance company decided whether it would cover her newborn baby who has a congenital birth defect

Do it for these real people and the thousands of Missourians who do not have affordable health insurance. Lives are on the line. The recent Families USA report estimates that without health care reform, 5200 Missourians will die prematurely in the next 9 years. Deadlock is deadly!

Here is what you can do

1. Sign an on-line petition at www.healthcarepetition.org.
2. Call Senators McCaskill and Bond and your Congressperson with this toll free number 1.800.828.0498. *Tell them that Missourians can't wait. Pass comprehensive health care reform now.*