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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE NEED FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE**

One of the biggest issues in the upcoming Presidential election concerns universal health care in America. While some people do not think it is necessary for our society, many facts portray the need for a change to be made. This problem is increasingly affecting more and more people each year. Now it is not just the uninsured citizens that are suffering from the current system. Due to rising costs of health care, more people who previously had insurance are forced to drop their coverage.

A major problem concerning universal health care is the way that it is viewed in our society. The United States government considers it to be a privilege to those who can afford it. The vast majority of developed countries around the world view universal health care as a basic right to their citizens. A shift in this view is the first step in a necessary shift to obtain universal health care in America.

The most notable group of people that suffer from a lack of universal health care are the nearly fifty million people who are uninsured. Contrary to popular belief, nearly eighty percent of people who are uninsured have jobs. These people are unable to get insurance either because their companies do not offer them insurance or the packages they offer are too expensive for the employees to afford it.

The problems that uninsured people in America face go a lot deeper than just not being able to afford health care. Uninsured people are more likely not to be able to fill prescriptions. This comes from the fact that out-of-pocket prescriptions cost much more without the help of insurance to cover the costs. The problems do not stop with prescriptions. Over forty percent of the uninsured do not have a regular place to go to get regular or preventative medical care. The majority of these people claim that the Emergency Room is their usual source of care. These visits to the E.R. just add to the disparity they pay by not having insurance. An obvious result of the higher costs that uninsured people incur in our medical system is the delayed medical services. Without insurance to help, people are forced to wait until they have enough money to pay the entirety of their medical bills before they can get service. This may lead to delayed diagnosis or treatment of diseases, leading to a higher mortality rate. When they are finally able to receive medical treatment, often the quality of care is lower than those who are covered by insurance. The problems that uninsured people face extend further than unpaid bills. Having to worry about these issues may lead to anxiety, depression, and

fear. These emotional effects on uninsured people, along with the financial strain medical care puts on them are obvious reasons why our government needs to make it possible for universal health care in our country.

Uninsured people are not the only ones who are negatively affected by a lack of universal health care. Increasingly, more people who are currently insured are being strained to continue to pay for coverage. Many companies are cutting their health care programs due to the continually rising costs. Of the companies that are able to keep the programs, prices are being raised while salaries are staying the same. This is leading to a higher percentage of people declaring bankruptcy. In a study conducted in 2005, nearly fifty percent of all those filing for bankruptcy cited medical issues for the reason of their bankruptcy. Of these people, nearly seventy percent of them were insured at the time of the accident. The rising costs meant that the majority of people could not afford the payments to continue their coverage. This study goes a long way in proving that it is solely the wealthy that are immune to the rising costs of health care while the rest of America is left struggling for ways to become or continued to be insured.

A major argument against implementing universal health care in America is the perceived large costs that would be created for our country each year. The Institute of Medicine estimates that the additional cost would be between \$34-\$69 billion each year for those who are currently uninsured to gain insurance. While this number seems relatively large, the long-term effects of not providing health care for everyone seem to outweigh this monetary cost.

Overall, people who are not covered by insurance do not contribute to the work force as long as those who are insured. The annual cost for Americans who suffer from weak health or shortened life spans runs somewhere between \$65-\$105 billion dollars each year. Not that all of these costs would be wiped out by providing affordable health care to all citizens, but they would be drastically reduced. It is a fact that people who do not live as long do not work as long or contribute as much to the economy. This also leads to more problems concerning Social Security, another major issue in our society today.

Another major effect of our current health care situation concerns our children. Those children who are uninsured suffer from greater delays in development due to medical problems. This leads to a weaker earning potential and quality of life. We see children as the future of our country, but we are doing very little to help them succeed. Along with greater danger from children, we are also at risk for a worse overall level of public health. Communities with high rates of uninsured are at a greater risk for the transfer of communicable diseases. Without proper vaccinations and monitoring, these diseases are spreading unnecessarily without notice until it is too late. Chronic diseases are also a larger problem with those who do not have insurance. Many people do not get the necessary preventative measures in the early stages of their diseases, leading to more complications in the later stages. With both our children and elderly citizens put at a disadvantage by our current health care system, it is imperative that a change is needed before it is too late.

The problems with our current health system are not confined to the economical arena. With the stresses of medical bills, there is growing familial stress. In some cases this may lead to divorce. As a result, parents are at a bigger disadvantage socially due to the stigma surrounding divorce, emotionally following the loss of a confidant, and economically after the high costs of the divorce. Many people also cite the loss of the American Dream as a result of expensive health care. Being able to provide for yourself and your family is a cornerstone of this ideal that America was built on, but more and more people are unable to do this when medical issues get in the way. Along with this, the growing disparity of the upper and lower classes weakens the idea of equal opportunity. With a smaller percentage of citizens who are able to afford health care each year, more people are filing for bankruptcy. This leads to fewer opportunities for equal education for their children, further hurting our country's future.

Overall, I believe that it is vital for our country's well being that our government find a way to offer universal health care. Many uninsured people in our country are facing insurmountable odds following medical issues, children are being denied opportunities to reach their full potential, and a higher percentage of people who are insured have to drop their programs due to rising costs. This issue is making the American Dream and equal opportunity ideals of the past that have taken a back seat for the economical prosperity of an elite few.

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