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Dear Friends,

From hard-working families to small business owners, thousands of Ohioans have been sending me their stories about their struggles with our health care system. Their message is clear: health care reform must protect what works and fix what's broken; it must give you choices in the health care you want, and it must help ensure economic stability for your family.

The summer months will be critical in our efforts to reform our health care system. Congress has a lot of work ahead, and your collective voices will help make sure we reform our health care system to work for all Americans.

### **Your Stories and Historic Health Care Reform**

When Michelle from Willoughby was first diagnosed with breast cancer, she had excellent coverage through her husband's insurance. But when her husband lost his job, she lost her insurance.

Not old enough for Medicare, she started a consulting business and eventually found an insurance plan – as exorbitant as it was. Michelle wrote to me recently saying that the "sum of her work is to pay for insurance."

Johnathan from Muskingum County described how his premiums and co-pays take 50 percent of his net income. Johnathan asked how millions of working Americans like him are supposed to stay healthy and get ahead if half of their income goes to medical bills.

Health care reform must reduce your costs, protect your choice of doctor and insurance plan, and expand access to quality, affordable health care for

### What We Can Do

As your United States Senator, my top priority is ensuring the best constituent services possible. My office is able to help you with concerns and questions you have about the federal government. We can also help you navigate federal programs and agencies. [Click here](#) »

### Website

To better serve you, I have created a website that is as much a "virtual office" as it is a source for information about your government. [Click here](#) »

### Sign-up

Sign up to receive my e-Newsletters and stay connected with what's happening in Congress. I send out monthly newsletters as well as regular issue-based e-alerts to help keep you informed about the latest actions in Congress. [Click here](#) »



all Ohioans.

That's the message that guided the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (H.E.L.P.) Committee to pass its historic health reform bill on July 15, 2009.

I'm proud to have voted for this bill that works for Ohio's middle class families, workers, seniors, and small businesses owners who work hard, play by the rules, and have inspired me to stand with them and not be intimidated by the special interests.

We accomplished a lot in this bill on prevention and wellness, eliminating fraud and abuse, and keeping insurers from denying you coverage based on your health status or limiting your benefits if you have a pre-existing condition – all ways to reduce your costs and improve the quality of care you receive. There is still much work to do, but passing this bill is a strong first step toward a health care system that works for all Americans.

#### **Access to Generic Drugs**

The average household income in Ohio for 2007 was \$46,597. Yet some of the most expensive kinds of prescription drugs, known as biologics, can cost \$10,000 to \$100,000 to \$200,000 a year.

These drugs help treat devastating diseases and chronic illnesses such as Alzheimer's, cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Health care reform must ensure that Ohioans have access to affordable, generic versions of these medications.

That's why I'm working to [increase access to generic biologic drugs](#) by limiting the monopoly of big pharmaceutical companies so that more Ohio seniors and families can afford medicines that are currently out of their reach.

Access to affordable, quality medication would help Ohioans like Kimberly from Miami County. Kimberly wrote to me about how her brother requires infusions of Remicade, an expensive biologic that can cost approximately \$20,000 a year and treats Rheumatoid Arthritis and Ulcerative Colitis. Kimberly's parents are at risk of losing their insurance, and if that happens, they would not be able to afford medication for Kimberly's brother. Kimberly's family, like so many Ohio families, needs access affordable generic drugs that won't shatter their health and financial security.



A public health insurance option will keep private insurers honest and reduce costs to help prevent health care spending from overwhelming the federal budget. By keeping what works and fixing what's broken, we can make sure our health care system works for all Americans.

### **A Strong Public Health Insurance Option**

To make lasting, meaningful change to our health care system – to make the system work for you – we must reform the health insurance market through a public health insurance option.



I recently [spoke](#) to thousands of volunteers who are fighting for a strong public health insurance option that will compete with private insurers to drive down premiums, reduce red tape, and keep health insurers honest.

A public health insurance option is designed for the public good rather than for private insurer profit. That's why I'm proud to have worked with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) to draft [a strong public health insurance option](#) that was part of the HELP Committee's historic health reform bill.

A public health insurance option gives you a choice. If you like the coverage you have, you can keep it. If you are unhappy with your coverage, or you're uninsured or underinsured, you will have new options from a menu of health insurance plans – both private and public. And, when life throws you a curve, a public health insurance option would give you the security net you need to get back on your feet.

### **Looking Ahead**

We must reform our health care system now. The status quo is not an option. About 14,000 Americans lose their insurance each day, American businesses are struggling to remain competitive as their premium costs rise, and billions of taxpayer dollars are wasted each year because of the inefficiencies in our health care system.

The special interests spend more than one million dollars a day to influence health care reform. We must not let them highjack this process.

Inaction will only lead to families paying more, getting less, and maybe losing it all.

I will fight for health care reform that brings down health care costs and provides Ohioans more choices in the health care they want. I encourage you to continue [sharing your stories](#) with me and let your voices guide real change to our health care system.

### **Additional Important Health Care Legislation**

In June, I attended President Obama's White House ceremony where he signed into law the [Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act](#), which includes a provision I authored that will protect consumers – and our children – from smokeless "tobacco candy" products.

Also in June, I worked on legislation that would improve the health of our nation's children. The [HEARTS Act](#) would place defibrillators in elementary and secondary schools, and the [Pediatric Workforce Investment Act](#) would increase the number of pediatric physicians in rural and underserved areas. I also introduced the [Hunger Free Schools Act](#) would increase the number of families enrolled in the national school lunch program – one of the most important programs designed to alleviate childhood hunger.

As debate on health care reform continues, I'll make sure your stories are heard in

Washington when Congress and President Obama finally reform our health care system to work for all Ohioans. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your comments, concerns, or questions by visiting [www.brown.senate.gov](http://www.brown.senate.gov).

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your comments, concerns, or questions by visiting [www.brown.senate.gov](http://www.brown.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown



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