



AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY



October 19, 2009

## **An Open Letter to the United States Senate: Don't Deceive Taxpayers by Hiding Health Care Reform Costs!**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the millions of members represented by the undersigned groups, we urge you to oppose S. 1776, the "Medicare Physician Fairness Act," and its appalling and dishonest attempt to mask the tremendous costs health care reform will impose upon American families and businesses. Considering the enormity and complexity of our health care system, the American people deserve honesty and transparency in a reform debate. This kind of legislative scheming fails to live up to the high standards to which this Congress claims to aspire.

Introduced by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), S. 1776 would raise reimbursements for physicians through Medicare to the tune of \$247 billion over 10 years. While this so-called "doc fix" has merit under the right circumstances as a means of preventing further erosion of physician participation in the Medicare program, this legislation contains no spending reductions elsewhere to offset its considerable cost. It would require that the Senate vote to waive its own budget rules, intended to protect taxpayers, and would represent a violation of "PAYGO" rules in the House as well. Perhaps more importantly, it serves as a deceptive measure to reduce the perceived cost of various plans for comprehensive health care overhaul.

Earlier this month, one such piece of legislation introduced by Finance Committee Chairman Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) received a 10-year cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office of \$829 billion. It achieved a score more than \$200 billion lower than the \$1.042 trillion plan drafted by the late Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in part by reducing physician reimbursements through Medicare. By engineering a \$247 billion reversal of part of the Baucus bill in separate legislation, it is clear that some leaders in Congress had no intent of allowing those reductions to take effect.

If Congress seeks a "doc fix," it should draft it into comprehensive health care reform legislation and allow it to be debated in proper context. Splitting higher reimbursements into a separate piece of legislation can only be an underhanded bait-and-switch attempt to deceive an American public that deserves better.

Sincerely,  
The Undersigned



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