

February 8, 2007

Michael Arcuri  
Arcuri For Congress  
3899 Oneida Street  
New Hartford, NY 13413

Dear Mike:

Congratulations on your stunning win! We look forward to working with you as our new U.S. representative.

We are writing as members of the Healthcare Work Group of the Coalition for Democracy of Central New York. Although CfD is a nonpartisan, grassroots group, we sponsored the SUCO debate between you and Ray Meier, and a number of our members worked on your campaign.

Our committee came together out of concern for the state of our healthcare system--an issue we know you put at the center of your campaign. Last September, we invited residents of Delaware and Otsego Counties to come to a Healthcare Speakout to voice their concerns about our healthcare system. In response, people poured out their stories: Some lacked health insurance altogether, others struggled with rising premiums and co-pays, limits on care, mountains of insurance paperwork, the lack of long-term care, dental and mental health care coverage. The list of problems was huge, some leading to tragic consequences.

In the months since, our group has made a study of possible reforms for our failing healthcare system. We engaged in 25 hours of study and discussion based on a curriculum we developed ourselves that examines healthcare systems in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K.--as well as the Medicare and VHA models.

After our study, we agreed that piecemeal reforms will not solve our healthcare crisis. We have agreed that we all want to work for a national healthcare system that is simple, portable, publicly funded, and covers everyone. In November, we sponsored a well-attended discussion with a doctor who had practiced for 15 years in nearby Delhi, and now practices in British Columbia, where the system

is simpler and better. In December, we testified at the New York State Assembly's public hearing on "How to Achieve Universal Health Coverage in New York State," arguing in favor of public universal healthcare.

Support for this kind of national insurance is growing. Last June, the Ithaca Common Council and Mayor Carolyn Peterson passed a resolution 9-0 in support of national health insurance. The resolution calls on Congress to pass single-payer legislation that would cover all Americans' basic, preventive, and emergency health care needs. Last October, the Ulster County legislature voted by a margin of 28-2 (including 12 Republicans) in support of "comprehensive, affordable high-quality health care through a single-payer financing mechanism for all Americans." A recent survey of New Yorkers found nearly half support replacing private insurance with universal public insurance. (The next most popular proposal, for mandating employer coverage, garnered only 35% support.)

In the past, many elected officials have said that while they supported universal public insurance, it simply wasn't politically viable. We think times have changed. What isn't viable today is trying to apply band-aids to extend the life of our complex, broken down healthcare system. Instead, we need an overhaul. We need a proven, simple solution that has already been adopted by most of the industrialized world.

We are writing to urge you to take leadership for national, publicly-funded universal health insurance, and to offer you our support in doing so. Would you be interested in creating a citizens' advisory committee on healthcare reform? If so, we would be honored to participate. We will do everything we can to organize in our area for any legislation for national insurance that you sign on to.

We'd be happy to discuss this issue with you or your staff. Please call Dave Grodsky at 607-263-5817.

Thanks so much!

Sincerely,

Mary Breuninger  
Dave Grodsky  
Michael Kaufman  
Paddy Lane  
Laura McClure

Rina Riba  
John Ruland  
Kathy Shimberg  
Kristina Turechek  
Sandra Twang