

THE REV. CHARLES S. CURRIE, JR.

A MINISTER IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 28, 2009

COPY

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
223 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-3703

Dear Senator Wyden:

The cause of providing universal health care to all Americans is one of the most challenging issues faced by this generation. **I am writing to encourage you to hold firm on the notion that a strong public option is needed for health care reform to be successful.** If starting from scratch I would advocate a single payer system. But that is out of reach. A strong public option, however, is the only tool that will bring America closer to the goal of covering 100% of our citizens. Many voices – from Republicans to Blue Dog Democrats – are urging that the public option be dropped or weakened. I urge you to expend what political capital is necessary not to allow them to win this important policy debate.

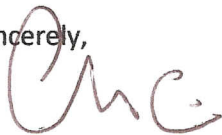
Senator, as a Portland minister I visit hospitals on a regular basis and talk with parishioners scared about how they will pay their medical bills. Some debate whether or not to seek treatment based simply on the cost alone. In my work with people experiencing homelessness, I've seen critically ill people released from hospitals and on to the streets when they truly needed care. I've worked with people suffering from serious mental health problems and addiction issues turned away from treatment because they lack insurance or the waiting lists are months long.

The United Church of Christ, with over 1.2 million members across the United States, including Oregon, is advocating for reform that includes:

- Coverage for all people
- Access regardless of ability to pay
- A full set of comprehensive benefits
- A choice of physicians and other providers
- Elimination of racial and ethnic and other health care disparities
- Waiver of pre-existing condition exclusions without age limits
- A robust public health insurance option

I can be reached at 971-322-7920 or [rev@chuckcurrie.com](mailto:rev@chuckcurrie.com) with any questions.

Sincerely,



The Rev. Chuck Currie