



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA - UAW

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IN REPLY REFER TO

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Dear Representative:

This week the House is scheduled to take up legislation to better protect the rights of patients. The UAW strongly supports the Patients' Bill of Rights sponsored by Representatives Ganske, Dingell and Norwood. (H. 2563). We urge you to support this legislation, and to oppose weaker alternative proposals, such as the bill sponsored by Representative Fletcher (S. 2315).

During the past decade working families have suffered through a vicious cycle of reduced health plan choices, more restrictions on their ability to get necessary medical treatment, and an emphasis on cost-cutting at the expense of quality. A comprehensive, enforceable set of consumer rights is long overdue. The UAW believes that the provisions contained in H. 2563 would provide that set of rights.

The Ganske-Dingell-Norwood bill would provide true accountability for health plans by ensuring an independent and timely external appeals process, meaningful access to state and federal courts and fair recovery on damage claims. The bill also provides an important consumer protection by allowing health care providers to advocate for patients without fear of retaliation or discrimination. In addition, the bill ensures that state and local workers, including thousands of UAW members, will be protected by federal standards. Finally, the Ganske-Dingell-Norwood bill provides timely access to specialists, broader access to clinical trials and investigational drugs, and equal access to off-formulary drugs.

In contrast, the Fletcher bill is lacking in all of these vital areas. It represents a thinly disguised effort to block meaningful legislation to protect the rights of patients.

The health insurance industry is putting on a full-court press to distort the terms of the Ganske-Dingell-Norwood and poison the debate. But the American people know the truth--they've lived it-- and they know how to keep score. The UAW urges you to vote for the real Patients' Bill of Rights by voting for the Ganske-Dingell-Norwood bill and against the Fletcher alternative. If there should be an effort to block the Ganske-Dingell-Norwood bill through an unfair rule, we ask that you oppose such tactics.

Thank you for considering our views on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Alan Reuther
Legislative Director

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