



**THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS®**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

March 27, 2001

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
United States House of Representatives  
2328 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of the United States, I am writing to endorse H.R. 526, the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001. For the past four years, the League of Women Voters has urged Congress to pass strong bipartisan patient protection legislation and we commend you for introducing legislation that will address some of the most serious problems in managed care today.

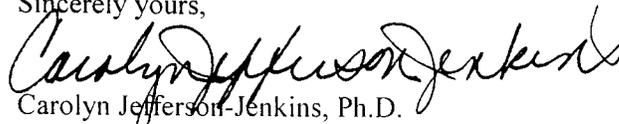
The League believes that strong patient protection legislation must:

- guarantee access to necessary care, allowing seriously ill persons or those with chronic conditions the right to get continued access to specialists without permission each time from managed care gatekeepers;
- establish the right to emergency room care using the "reasonably prudent person" standard;
- provide patients with an independent appeals process that will resolve grievances in a timely manner;
- hold health plans legally accountable if they harm a patient.

In 1993, after a three-year study of the health care system, the League of Women Voters concluded that universal access to quality health care for all U.S. residents and stringent cost containment for health care outlays is essential. While we believe that managed care is an integral part of the health care equation, we are concerned that the emphasis many managed care plans have placed on cost control has come at the expense of providing a basic level of quality care to patients. Since the proportion of employees enrolled in managed care plans has risen from 27 percent in 1988 to 91 percent in 1999, this is a problem that affects many Americans.

The League of Women Voters appreciates your ongoing leadership on this critical issue and we look forward to working with you to pass a real patients' bill of rights.

Sincerely yours,

  
Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, Ph.D.  
President