

Dear Ms. RN:

Thank you for contacting me regarding our nation's health care system. I appreciate your taking the time to write.

Throughout the nation the cost of medical care continues to rise and is unaffordable for many individuals and businesses. This problem is most acute in New Mexico. Without health reform, our state is expected to experience the greatest increase in health insurance premiums in the nation. For example, the average employer sponsored insurance premium for a family in New Mexico was about \$6,000 in 2000. By 2006, this rate had almost doubled to over \$11,000. By 2016, this amount is expected to rise to an astonishing \$28,000. New Mexicans also spend more on health insurance premiums as a percentage of their income than almost all other Americans.

As you may know, the Senate passed H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act by a vote of 60-39. Currently, the Senate and the House of Representatives are discussing differences between the two versions of this legislation and are trying to determine a process for moving forward with this legislation. I believe we are at a critical point when it comes to our health care system, and that we need to implement major changes. As a member of both the Committees on Finance and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), I have worked to create legislation to address three key areas: containing health care costs, ensuring that every American has access to affordable health insurance, and improving the quality of care. I also believe we must work towards responsible legislation that is paid for and does not increase the deficit and ensures that people who like their coverage should be able to keep it. I understand the importance of this issue, and please be assured I will keep your comments in mind as the Senate debates comprehensive health care reform.

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Again, thank you for writing. I hope you will continue to keep me informed of issues of importance to you and your community.

Sincerely,

JEFF BINGAMAN  
United States Senator