

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

July 23, 2010

COMMITTEES:

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND FORESTS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Senate President Peter Courtney
900 Court St. NE, S-201
Salem, OR 97301

Speaker of the House Dave Hunt
900 Court St. NE, H-269
Salem, OR 97301

Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli
900 Court St. NE, S-323
Salem, OR 97301

House Minority Leader Bruce Hanna
900 Court St. NE, H-395
Salem, OR 97301

Dear President Courtney, Speaker Hunt, Leader Ferrioli, and Leader Hanna:

I write to lend my support to your efforts to develop an Oregon-specific plan for our state to do health reform its own way. I believe in the concept of "state choice," and that every state has the right to provide health care to its own residents in its own way, as long as the goal is to provide all citizens with quality, comprehensive coverage.

Oregon has a history of leading the nation in the field of health care, among other sectors. For this reason, I authored section 1332 under the new health reform law: the "Waiver for State Innovation." Because of this section, passage of the federal legislation opens the way for states to continue to work for cost-effective health care for their residents, while still retaining the access to federal dollars that would have been available under the federal plan.

The first thing a state must do to obtain a waiver is pass a law that contains a plan for insuring the same number of residents that would have been covered under the federal law. I urge the Oregon House and Senate to pursue methods of achieving this goal with vigor, creativity, and confidence. It is not my intent to impinge on the process of creating a plan, but I want you to know that I and my staff will be available as a resource, on a bipartisan basis, as your deliberations move forward. When and if an Oregon waiver is designed, I look forward to helping the state obtain approval at the federal level to obtain the necessary waivers from federal legislation.

I will also pursue federal legislation to move the waiver implementation date up as soon as possible, so that Oregon could swiftly put its own plan into action.

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator