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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2215

January 30, 2009

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President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

I offer my sincere congratulations on your recent inauguration. The vision you shared for our nation, and the global community, is to be applauded. I have the utmost confidence in your ability to lead our great nation during the trying times in which we find ourselves. I stand prepared to partner with you to accomplish the numerous laudable policy goals you have set forth.

As we begin the 111th Congress, I am especially delighted that you are making one of the centerpieces of your agenda health care for all Americans. It is clear that while our current system offers the best medical care in the world, it is not working for too many and is economically unsustainable. Our current health care system has also placed American businesses at a competitive disadvantage in the world market. The American people will support a proper system of national health insurance and the changes necessary to bring it about.

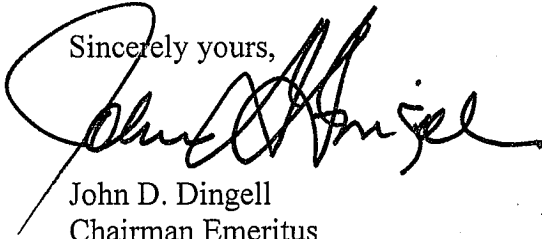
If we are to succeed in making the necessary changes to reform our health care system to cover all Americans, we must begin the legislative process immediately. As the Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce during our last major attempt to reform our health care system, I can tell you failure to do so will replicate the failure to enact legislation under the Clinton Administration in 1994.

The superb February 1993 speech of President Clinton had the nation in solid support of his legislation. However, by the time the legislation arrived at Congress, a large, some say \$500 million, expenditure, principally funded by the health insurance lobby, had made the bill impossible to enact. I urge you, Mr. President, please do not allow repetition of this unfortunate event.

The Congress and the people are ready for the legislation and anxious for the process of enactment to commence. As the designated lead sponsor of the health care reform legislation that the House Committee on Energy and Commerce will consider, I look forward to working with you on a legislative proposal that can be presented to Congress with all deliberate speed. Delay has the potential to destroy our chances at success as it did before.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Dingell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

John D. Dingell
Chairman Emeritus
Committee on Energy and Commerce