Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you today to express our sincere desire to work with you and find common ground on the issue of health care reform. As President, you've identified health care reform as a critical issue for millions of Americans, particularly those who cannot currently afford health care coverage for themselves or their families. We agree it is critical, and hope to work with you to enact legislation this year that improves health care for all Americans.

Despite our differences on some important health care-related issues, we are convinced there are areas offering potential for common ground on health care reform among Republicans and Democrats. These areas for potential agreement are evident in the similarities between some of our recently-outlined health care reform principles and yours:

- We believe we must make quality health care coverage affordable and accessible for every American, regardless of pre-existing health conditions. You've called for a plan that "puts us on a clear path to cover all Americans," and said "no American should be denied coverage because of preexisting conditions."

- We believe health care reform must let Americans who like their health care coverage keep it, and give all Americans the freedom to choose the health plan that best meets their needs. You've said Americans "should have the option of keeping their employer-based health plan," and said reform "should provide Americans a choice of health plans and physicians."

- We believe health care reform must improve Americans lives through effective prevention, wellness, and disease management programs, while developing new treatments and cures for life-threatening diseases. You've said health care reform must address "cost drivers" in our system such as "obesity, sedentary lifestyles, and smoking."

We believe it is possible, and necessary, to achieve these objectives through common sense reforms without rationing care, eliminating employer-sponsored health benefits for working families, raising taxes, or empowering government bureaucrats at the expense of patients and doctors. We also believe these goals can be accomplished through health reform that maintains current law provisions regarding restrictions on federal funding of abortion services, restricts federal funds from flowing to abortion providers, and does not impose mandates either on insurance carriers or medical providers to participate in activities that violate their religious and moral beliefs.

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The House GOP Solutions Group on Health Care Reform is at work as we write, crafting a plan that will achieve the goals we share. We hope it can serve as the basis for finding common ground and a bipartisan solution.

Accordingly, we respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss areas for potential common ground on health care reform. Our hope is that such a dialogue will lay the groundwork for an honest debate and open process that will culminate in enactment this year of significant and truly bipartisan health care reform legislation. We may not agree on everything, but we can agree on some important things. An open and constructive dialogue across party lines on this critical issue is essential to producing good policy for the American people.

Sincerely,

Rep. John Boehner (R-OH)

Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA)

Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN)

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)

Rep. John Carter (R-TX)

Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX)

Rep. Roy Blunt (R-MO)

Rep. David Dreier (R-CA)

Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)