

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

September 13, 1999

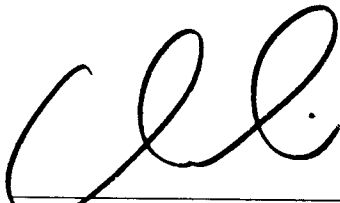
**Small Business Supports Managed Care Reform**

Dear Colleague:

For your consideration, this is one small business group's view of H.R. 2723, the bipartisan managed care reform legislation. Small businesses consider it every bit as important that their employees (often times their families) get the care they paid for when they need it. For your reference, we have attached the American Small Business Alliance's endorsement of H.R. 2723, the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999.

If you have further questions or would like to cosponsor this reasonable, bipartisan legislation, call Bridgett Taylor or Amy Droskoski at 226-3400 (Commerce Committee) or Rodney Whitlock at 225-4101 (Norwood).

Sincerely,



---

CHARLIE NORWOOD



---

JOHN D. DINGELL



American Small Business Alliance

September 9, 1999

Rep. Charlie Norwood  
1707 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dr. Norwood,

I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 2723, the Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999. With the clear support of the public, of small businesses, and of a bipartisan majority in the House, it is time to see the gridlock end and this legislation to be passed.

**H.R. 2723 is a needed remedy for America's small businesses.** By demanding greater disclosure of a health plan's benefits and processes, small employers – many without human resources departments – will have an easier time comparing plans and understanding what they are buying. It will level the playing field for small businesses, ensuring them the same minimum standards and levels of service that big businesses can negotiate on their own. It will lead to healthier and more productive workers by requiring an independent appeals process for disputed claims, allowing employees and bosses to focus on their jobs rather than being embroiled in constant fights with the health care bureaucracy.

**H.R. 2723 holds insurance companies, not small businesses, legally liable.** Despite what opponents claim, H.R. 2723 makes insurance companies – just like doctors and nurses – accountable for the decisions they make; small businesses specifically are excluded from liability.

**H.R. 2723 is a good value for small business.** The Congressional Budget Office and nearly every other independent study says the legislation will increase premiums for each employee no more than a couple of dollars per month. Under the current system, as rates go up, the quality of coverage stays the same or even gets weaker. At least with the Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act, the slight rise will bring a tangible improvement, giving small businesses and employees a better value for their health care dollar.

**The small business community wants this type of legislation to pass.** In a national scientific poll conducted last year by the Kaiser-Harvard Program on Health Policy and the ASBA Education Fund, an overwhelming majority of small business executives said they supported each of the bill's main provisions – including the right to sue health plans (61 percent support) – even if it might increase the cost of insurance. Fewer than 1 percent of employers said they'd consider dropping coverage as a result. More than two-thirds favored each provision as a way to make sure people get the care they need, rejecting the idea that this is unnecessary government involvement in health care.

Lastly, reforms already have been implemented in states like Texas, where Gov. George W. Bush allowed the bill to become law. In the 1 ½ years since its enactment, premiums in Texas have not gone up disproportionately to the rest of the country nor have any health plans left the state. And what about the flood of lawsuits? To date, fewer than a handful have been filed.

H.R. 2723 makes good sense for America's small businesses and their workers. Congress should make its passage one of its highest priorities.

Sincerely,

Joel Marks  
Executive Director