

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

October 20, 2009

The Honorable Ted Strickland  
Riffe Center, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 33215-6108

Dear Governor Strickland:

As Ohio struggles to retain jobs, restore its economy and fill the state budget hole, we are writing to respectfully ask that you express your unequivocal opposition to proposals before Congress that could worsen the state's current situation, hurt millions of Ohioans, and seriously undermine any chance of recovery for years to come.

According to numerous media reports and independent analyses, the health care legislation currently moving through Congress would impose massive new unfunded federal mandates on states by widely expanding the ranks of Medicaid and placing the bulk of the additional financial burden on state governments. A chart released recently by the Heritage Foundation provided a state-by-state breakdown of the additional burden this legislation would impose on the states.

We are very concerned about the impact any unfunded mandate created by this expansion would have on Ohio. According to an October 7 story in the *Columbus Dispatch*, the Senate Finance Committee bill currently being considered would add nearly 800,000 Ohioans to the state's Medicaid program, by raising the current income ceiling of \$22,050 to \$29,300 for a family of four to be eligible for the program. This bill could impose an unfunded mandate of \$922 million on Ohio from 2014 to 2019, and then cost an additional \$1.2 billion per year beginning in 2020. Other recent proposals would be even more devastating. Also on October 7, *CongressNow* reported Congress may increase the Medicaid expansion to cover people earning up to 150 percent of the poverty level. This could raise Ohio's costs even more dramatically. An unfunded mandate on Ohio of this magnitude would likely drain state funding for our seniors and school children and force tax increases on all Ohioans.

Some in Washington seem to be aware of the effects these proposals will have on states. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, for example, has cut a deal to ensure that the federal government would pay the full cost of expanding Medicaid in Senator Reid's home state of Nevada. If these cost-shifting proposals don't have to apply to Senator Reid's home state, why should taxpayers in Ohio, which has been hit as hard by the recession as any other state, still have to pay the price?

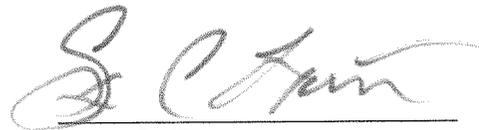
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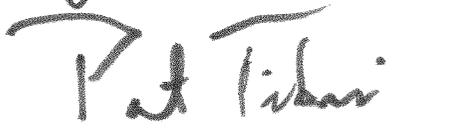
Many other governors, Democratic and Republican, have gone on the record with their clear opposition to this plan due to the harmful effect it will have on the people of their states. As Dennis Smith of the Heritage Foundation wrote recently: "One day perhaps, Congress will realize that expanding Medicaid comes at the expense of other state and federal priorities including education and the child welfare system. As Medicaid grows, funding for other programs shrink, which in turn, increases demand for Medicaid to become the source of funding for those other programs. Only the governors have the clout to push back and break the vicious cycle that...threatens to bankrupt the states."

For this reason, we respectfully ask that you express clear opposition on behalf of our state to the legislation moving through Congress. The unfunded mandates the health care bill would impose on our state will hurt Ohio school children, taxpayers and seniors. Your voice as our governor is needed to help stop this harmful legislation from being enacted into law. We believe it is critical that both parties work together to extend access to high quality, affordable health care, and we stand ready to work with you and the Obama administration to develop a responsible health care bill that will truly improve our health care system.

Sincerely,

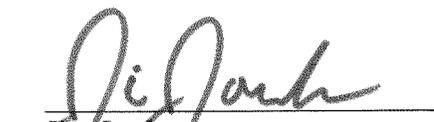
  
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John Boehner  
Member of Congress

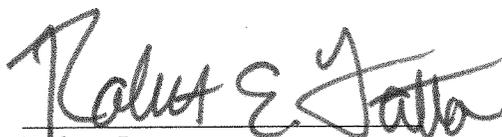
  
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Steve LaTourette  
Member of Congress

  
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Pat Tiberi  
Member of Congress

  
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Mike Turner  
Member of Congress

  
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Jean Schmidt  
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Jim Jordan  
Member of Congress

  
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Robert Latta  
Member of Congress

  
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Steve Austria  
Member of Congress