

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District spoke today on the House floor in opposition to legislation that will repeal health insurance reform.

“Thank you, Madam Speaker. During this difficult economic time, it is critical that we make job creation a top priority. That is why I am concerned about the impact H.R. 2 will have on small businesses.

“The Republican plan would repeal a 35 percent tax credit for small businesses that offer health insurance to their employees. It would allow insurers to deny a business coverage if their employees had pre-existing conditions.

“As a result of health insurance reform, New Mexicans no longer face this discrimination. If this protection is repealed, having cancer or diabetes, or even being a victim of domestic violence, could lead to a denial of insurance. Discrimination for pre-existing conditions will be alive and well. All of that would be dangerous for New Mexicans.

“People like Yvonne from Santa Fe would once again have to worry about losing their health care. Yvonne lost her job when the company she worked for shipped it overseas. Yvonne was diabetic and because of the high cost of COBRA she was forced to ration her medicine. As a result she became gravely ill and had to visit the emergency room. There, doctors noticed another problem that required further examination. Yet because Yvonne could not afford COBRA and because private insurance companies would not insure her because she had diabetes, the hospital released her.

“The only option Yvonne had was to wait two months to be seen at the University of New Mexico hospital. After that visit she was diagnosed with a form of lung cancer that would have been caught earlier if she had not been kicked out. Yvonne passed away from complications

resulting from the cancer, having suffered through a system that discriminated against her.

“We simply cannot return to the days when people like Yvonne are forced to suffer because of insurance companies’ bad practices. Please, let’s not turn a blind eye on people like Yvonne.”

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