

Luján Offered Amendments to Protect Consumers

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District voted in opposition today to House Republicans’ effort to repeal health insurance reform and end critical patient protections. Luján fought hard last year to take on the insurance companies and pass reforms that increase access and improve care. In an effort to once again stand up to insurance companies, Luján had offered a number of amendments with his colleagues aimed at protecting the most important aspects of reform that benefit New Mexicans.

“Last year, Congress took an historic step when we passed health insurance reform that finally holds insurance companies accountable and puts an end to the industry’s worst abuses,” said Congressman Luján. “No longer will New Mexicans have to worry they will be denied care because of a pre-existing condition. Hard-working families across our state that have always paid their premiums will not have to live in fear that their insurance plan will be canceled when they get sick.”

“Yet in the first major action of this Congress, Republicans made it clear that the interests of the insurance companies trump the needs of the American people,” Luján added. “Their efforts to repeal critical reforms that strengthen Medicare, provide tax cuts to small businesses, and make prescription drugs more affordable represent a giant step backward in the effort to ensure that quality, affordable health care is available to New Mexicans. That is why I offered commonsense amendments that would protect consumers.”

Luján’s amendments, which were blocked by the House Republican-controlled Rules Committee, would have left intact provisions of health insurance reform that end discrimination for pre-existing conditions; prevent rescissions of health insurance coverage; improve health care for Native Americans; and provide quality health care in rural America.

How repealing health insurance reform will hurt New Mexico’s Third Congressional

District:

- Reduces coverage for 327,000 residents with health insurance.
- Ends tax credits and other assistance for up to 163,000 families and 14,100 small businesses to help them afford coverage.
- Weakens Medicare for 94,000 beneficiaries and reopens the prescription drug donut hole.
- Adds 110,000 residents back to the ranks of the uninsured.
- Allows insurance companies to once again deny coverage to 116,000 residents with pre-existing conditions.
- Allows insurance companies to once again drop coverage when people get sick.
- Prevents 4,100 young adults under the age of 26 from obtaining coverage through their parents' insurance plans.
- Reduces the solvency of Medicare.

Already, New Mexicans have benefited from health insurance reform, receiving:

- A \$250 rebate to help 11,727 Medicare beneficiaries pay for prescriptions in the donut hole coverage gap.
- \$26.4 million to support capital development in health centers.
- \$1.4 million for Tribal, Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs
- \$1 million to crack down on unreasonable insurance premium increases.

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