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Subcommittee on Water and Power

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections
Subcommittee Early Childhood, Elementary and
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July 7, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

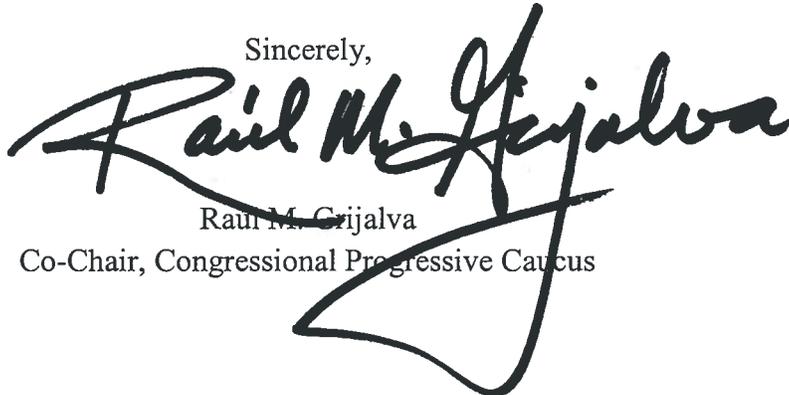
I read with alarm and dismay the article in the July 7th edition of the Wall Street Journal, “**White House Open to Deal on Public Health Plan**”. In particular, White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel stated in the article that one of several ways to meet your health care reform goals is a mechanism under which a public plan is introduced only if the marketplace fails to provide sufficient competition on its own.

I want to be crystal clear that any such trigger for a strong public plan option is a non-starter with a majority of the Members of the Progressive Caucus (CPC). As the CPC has repeatedly stated, its Members cannot support final passage of any health care reform bill that does not include a robust public plan option, akin to Medicare, operating alongside the private plans.

Public opinion polls show that 76% of Americans want a robust public plan option and I will stand in solidarity with them. Moreover, I consider it unacceptable for any of the cost savings that you are negotiating with hospitals and other sectors of the health care industry to be made contingent upon a robust public plan option not being included in the final legislation.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Raul M. Grijalva
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus