

## A TWENTY-PAGE BILL IN PLAIN ENGLISH TO REDUCE PREMIUMS AND HELP LAID-OFF AMERICANS

**THIS BILL IS NOT DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH OR YOUR FREEDOM**

**CONTAINS NO MANDATES ON INDIVIDUALS OR STATES**

**PR Newswire**

**New York, NY--February 24, 2010:** Betsy McCaughey, patient advocate and former Lt. Governor of New York State, announced a 20 page bill, written in plain English that should help inspire conversation at tomorrow's summit.

"Every day Americans tell me they want a bill written in plain English. They want members of Congress to read the entire bill before voting. They want a bill anyone can inspect. A twenty page bill means that pork projects, secret deals, and exemptions for Washington insiders cannot be slipped between the pages. This bill does not give the American people the run-around. Twenty pages should be enough. The framers of the Constitution established the entire federal government in just eighteen pages," said McCaughey

This bill recognizes that states have regulated health insurance for over six decades, consistent with the McCarran-Ferguson Act (1945). Some states have taken smart approaches to lowering costs and expanding access, especially to people with pre-existing conditions. This bill copies what works, not what has failed.

**Title 1:** Liberates consumers to buy policies from other states, and puts consumers on notice that the products they buy out-of-state may have different consumer protections than those imposed in their own state. This title also imposes federal consumer protections on plans sold interstate, ensuring that those plans prohibit rescission and protect consumers who have paid their premiums from being dropped.

**Title 2:** Provides federal incentives for states to establish medical courts, ensuring quicker, fairer verdicts in medical liability cases and at the same time preserving every litigant's right to trial by jury. Medical courts will be presided over by a judge who knows the issues, has the experience, can identify honest expert witnesses and reduce the impact of those who are not honest. Tort law has always been a matter left to states. This bill does not mandate that states establish medical courts or attempt to federalize tort law. It does provide block grants to states to impose caps on damages and, more importantly, to establish medical courts. "Why just cap unjust damage awards when you can eliminate them by having expert judges?" asks McCaughey

**Title 3:** Provides federal incentives for states to establish or improve subsidized high risk pools to help consumers with pre-existing conditions and poor health. This concept is similar to what is also proposed in the Patients' Choice Act, supported by Senator Tom Coburn. No state is required to establish these pools.

**Title 4:** Extends the current 65% COBRA subsidy, established by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The President's fiscal 2011 budget also contains such an extension. Republicans are likely to find this an important common ground. COBRA subsidies are not a permanent entitlement but rather a temporary helping hand to those who have been laid off. The average COBRA annual premium for a family of four is \$13, 322, a big price tag when you've lost your job. "For over half of uninsured Americans legally in this country, being uninsured is a temporary problem. They find another job and are insured again in less than a year. We need to help them in between jobs," says McCaughey.

The ten year cost of Titles 1, 2 and 3 of this bill is \$27 billion dollars. The COBRA extension is already included in the President's fiscal 2011 budget. Funding this COBRA subsidy could cost \$24 billion per year and provide coverage for an estimated 7 million people.

The bill can be reviewed at [www.defendyourhealthcare.us](http://www.defendyourhealthcare.us) or at [www.spectator.org](http://www.spectator.org).