

Douglas Lucas
[street address]
Fort Worth, TX 76109
[email address]

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

16 September 2009

Dear Representative:

I'm writing to support your insistence that a healthcare reform "bill without a strong public option will not pass the House" (your *Press Release*, 3 Sept. 2009), to agree with your statement that if "a vigorous public option is not included, it would be a major victory for the health insurance industry" (your *Press Release*, 3 Sept. 2009), to ask you to continue to insist on a strong, government-run public option — which, as you know, does not mean a co-op plan such as that of Senator Max Baucus — and to ask you to fight any spin attempting to pass off a co-op plan as a "public option." I'm a self-employed writer and tutor in Fort Worth, Texas, and, just out of college, I'm working toward a public-school teaching certification. Like many Americans, I have a pre-existing condition — in my case, **[type of pre-existing condition]**. I lose my BC/BS disability coverage in February.

My medicine for this one illness alone costs nearly \$1000 per month. Without reliable health insurance, I cannot responsibly teach public school. Sure, a school would provide me with group coverage, but what if I were laid off? COBRA only goes so far; high-risk pools only go so far. Just as you chose a career in civil service to help others, so I want to help others, and a government-run public option would give me a strong safety net so I could focus on teaching. A co-op plan wouldn't have the membership clout needed to compete with private insurance. The Iowa state government tried a nonprofit co-op — and it died in two years (*New York Times*, 17 Aug 2009). Just like a trigger plan, a co-op plan would take longer to start than a government-run plan, and we don't have any more time. According to a 2007 *American Journal of Medicine* study, an American family files for bankruptcy in the aftermath of an illness every 30 seconds. In 2009 the *Center for American Progress* explained that every day, 14,000 Americans lose their health insurance: 2,190 in your state, 470 in mine. Every day. It is a moral issue.

Thank you for fighting in favor of a strong, government-run public option. Please keep fighting.

Sincerely,

[hand signature]
Douglas Lucas