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## WHY CPPPP SUPPORTS CONGRESS' HEALTH REFORM BILLS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE THE FINAL BILL BETTER

Austin, Texas—The Center for Public Policy Priorities today released the following statement regarding the center's position on the U.S. Senate's national health reform bill:

Yesterday, the U.S. Senate's national health reform bill passed the second of three "cloture" votes required before a final vote on the bill. The third cloture vote is expected today, with the final floor vote on Thursday. When both chambers return from holiday recess on January 4, the process of negotiating a compromise between the Senate and House bills will begin.

CPPPP agrees with many other analysts that the House bill provides a stronger reform package than the Senate bill, because it:

- expand coverage sooner;
- provides better premium assistance for low- and moderate-income Texans—more than 70 percent of Texas' uninsured; and
- includes stronger insurance reforms and price negotiation powers through a National Health Insurance Exchange.

CPPPP strongly rejects the calls from both left and right to "kill" the Senate's bill. The Senate legislation includes valuable reforms, and the must be approved before the House and Senate can negotiate a compromise. We all must work to ensure that the final bill is a monumental step forward in assuring access to affordable, quality coverage for every American. If the current process fails, experts of every sort agree that it will be many years before another opportunity to reform America's health care system will emerge. In the meantime, without reform, access to and quality of health care will get much worse. See "The Costs of Failure: Economic Consequences of Failure to Enact Nixon, Carter, and Clinton Health Reforms," on The Commonwealth Fund Blog: <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/Blog/The-Costs-of-Failure.aspx>.

CPPPP asks our U.S. House members to fight to improve the final bill through negotiations with the Senate, to improve affordability for those earning less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and to establish a strong set of minimum standards for new health insurance regulations in a national or state-operated Health Insurance Exchange (read CPPPP's recent open letter to the Texas congressional delegation for more details: <http://www.cphp.org/research.php?aid=935> ). During the holiday recess and the weeks to come, please visit and call on your member of Congress to do everything in their power to improve the final bill by including the House's stronger affordability and market reform provisions in the final bill.

Texas has much at stake. Our delegation needs to hear from you.

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*The Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPPP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy institute committed to improving public policies to better the economic and social conditions of low- and moderate-income Texans. Learn more at <http://www.cphp.org>.*