



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1434

Resolution calling upon the state and federal governments to use public funds to insure the unemployed and other vulnerable groups without health insurance.

By Council Members Brewer, Comrie, James, Mendez, Nelson and White Jr.

Whereas, In the United States the number of individuals living without health insurance is a staggering 47 million; and

Whereas, In New York State alone the number of uninsured is approximately 2.8 million, with 1.5 million residing in New York City; and

Whereas, The federal government and state governments offers several types of public health insurance programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and the State Child Health Insurance Program, which strive to protect certain vulnerable populations including people with

low incomes, individuals with disabilities, the elderly and children; and

Whereas, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services noted that healthcare spending grew to more than \$2.1 trillion in 2006, accounting for 16 percent of the gross domestic product; and

Whereas, While this financial commitment represents a significant federal investment, the amount of people who continue to remain uninsured and without any government assistance plan explain why many advocates believe that the current United States healthcare system is broken and in desperate need of repair; and

Whereas, Some advocate that the only solution is universal healthcare to insure everyone in the United States, while others advocate for a competitive market-based healthcare system; and

Whereas, While there are many barriers to becoming insured, a recent National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation (NIHCMF) report found that one out of every four uninsured individuals in the United States may actually be eligible for government subsidized coverage but not enrolled; and

Whereas, Despite the fact that a quarter of the uninsured population may be eligible for coverage, the NIHCMF report indicates that there are still roughly 9.1 million uninsured childless adults and 4.8 million parents with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) who are not eligible for any sort of public coverage; and

Whereas, Given the current economic climate of the United States, experts predict that for every one point rise in the U.S. unemployment rate, the number of uninsured persons is projected to increase by 1.1 million; and

Whereas, One possible solution to assist the uninsured and unemployed in the healthcare crisis, is a partnership between the federal and state government to form a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), similar to a single payer framework, to ensure that unemployed individuals receive necessary coverage; and

Whereas, This HMO would be financed jointly between the federal and state governments and would be better able to negotiate lower rates for medical services provided; and

Whereas, Such an HMO could put a strong emphasis on ensuring that individuals have the opportunity to select a primary care physician who would then refer the patient for additional treatment if warranted; and

Whereas, Another vulnerable group are employees of small businesses across the United States, who are uninsured and are not offered insurance options from their employers due to high premiums; and

Whereas, The creation and promotion of a tax credit that the owner of a small business could receive to offset the high costs of providing health insurance to all of their employees would result in fewer people being uninsured in the United States; and

Whereas, If this type of system was adopted, a significant number of the 47 million uninsured individuals would have healthcare and could thus manage their healthcare needs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the state and federal governments to use public funds to insure the unemployed and other vulnerable groups without health insurance.

JM
LS# 5357
May 12, 2008