

California **Labor** Federation | AFL-CIO

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Response to Health Care Reform Proposal by State Democratic Leaders

Statement from Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, California Labor Federation

“For nearly a year, California’s working and middle class families have been actively calling attention to the need for a real solution to our state’s health care crisis. We respect the fact that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has attached his political legacy to health care. We also appreciate the leadership of Speaker Fabian Nuñez and Senate President Don Perata on this issue, along with all of the work performed by Democrats in the State Assembly and Senate.

“The California Labor Federation will be holding a series of meetings this week with our leadership across the state to review the latest health care proposal put forth by Speaker Nuñez and Senator Perata. During these meetings, members of the California Labor Federation representing more than two million working and middle class families will receive a thorough analysis of the proposal from the Labor Federation’s health care experts and analysts. Afterwards our leaders will vote to take a formal position on the proposal and we will announce the results of the vote.

“In considering the proposal, the California Labor Federation will analyze whether the proposal adequately addresses the core principles that must be the foundation for any real health care proposal, including:

Affordability. Hard working California families should not have to choose between supporting their families or paying for health care - we need reform that will make health care more affordable for working and middle class California families by guaranteeing that everyone is paying their fair share.

Shared Responsibility. Health care reform must represent true sharing of responsibility and risks. A plan that caps the contribution of every party except for individuals and families is not shared responsibility. Given that California has fewer employers offering

health care to their workers than 45 other states in the nation, we are particularly concerned about any proposal that would allow more employers to stop offering health care and legally force California workers to buy unaffordable health care.

Control costs. Healthcare reform must employ a variety of meaningful strategies to control costs, for example: increasing consumers' access to information about health care quality and cost so that their choices can help make the market more efficient; creating a public insurer to provide greater competition in the insurance market, and increasing our use of our bulk purchasing power to control the cost of prescription drugs.”

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