



Statement of Eve Weissman
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Good morning. My name is Eve Weissman. I am the Health Care Campaign Coordinator for the New Jersey Citizen Action Education Fund, a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization promoting the empowerment of low- and middle-income people through research, education, and training around public policy issues. We work with the State's largest, independent citizen watchdog coalition, New Jersey Citizen Action, which represents over 100 labor, tenant, religious, community, women's, environmental, civil rights, and senior organizations and over 60,000 family members who live throughout New Jersey. For our entire organizational history we have worked to improve the quality of life for New Jersey's working families and seniors including guaranteed access to high quality and affordable health care for every resident.

I am happy to join today with our state partners and allies to release a ground-breaking new report by New Jersey Policy Perspective, analyzing the impact of the health care reform bill (HR 3200) currently being debated in the US House of Representatives on New Jersey consumers of all stripes. The report clearly shows that low- and middle-class working families, seniors and people with disabilities, children, childless adults, and small businesses in New Jersey would benefit either directly or indirectly from this legislation. Additionally, HR 3200 would provide much needed relief to the state government by increasing the federal government's share of funds for health services to low- and moderate-income people. The legislation will accomplish all these goals at no cost to most New Jersey taxpayers.

We know that despite our state's great public programs to provide affordable health coverage to low- and moderate-income families and New Jersey's strong insurance market regulations, relative to most other states, that millions of New Jerseyans still cannot afford the health care they need. HR 3200 would improve access to affordable health care for New Jerseyans and drastically reduce the number of uninsured families in our state. Uninsured families would be eligible for subsidies on a sliding scale and those ineligible for subsidies would still be able to purchase insurance through a new marketplace called the Exchange, providing a choice of different health insurance plans including a public health insurance option. Families with insurance would know that if they became uninsured because they lost their job or moved in or out of New Jersey, they could obtain comprehensive, affordable insurance through this national exchange. It is critical that the affordability provisions in HR 3200 are maintained and not watered

down. It is also important that a strong public health insurance plan is preserved in the bill as this is critical to lowering costs and improving access to affordable care across the health care system.

As the debate around national health care reform has become increasingly controversial and heated, there is a tremendous amount of misinformation and misunderstanding around what is being proposed and the impact it will have on families, small businesses, and our economy. This new report provides a clear yet in-depth analysis of key provisions in HR 3200 and lays out the positive impact the legislation will have on our state.