

Dear Friend,

Tonight I voted in favor of the Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2009.

For more on why I voted in favor of health insurance reform and for a Q&A about the legislation, please visit my website: <http://israel.house.gov/healthcare> .

I believe we need health insurance reform in the United States for two key reasons.

First, the cost of health care is simply too expensive for too many Long Island families and businesses. The average Long Islander has seen their health insurance premiums increase 80% in ten years.

Recently, Long Island businesses have been hit with double-digit premium increases. As a result, more companies are forced to cut payroll, trim raises, or increase employee contributions. Some have told me if this continues, they will have to consider cutting health insurance altogether.

Without this bill, the average Long Island family will see their health costs increase \$1,800 every year. In a region with unacceptably high property taxes and energy costs, we simply cannot afford to allow health care to continue skyrocketing. The best way to bring down those costs is to give consumers more choices and require insurance companies to compete for your business.

Second, we must end the insurance industry practice of denying coverage due to preexisting conditions. We must stop the "sticker shock" you get when you open an insurance company statement and learn that you'll have to pay for a greater share of services that you assumed were covered. We must ensure you are getting the coverage you pay for.

As always, I look forward to hearing your views and opinions.

Sincerely,

Steve Israel
Member of Congress