

National Coalition on

BENEFITS

January 16th, 2008

The Honorable Mitt Romney
Romney for President, Inc.
P.O. Box 55239
Boston, MA 02205-5239

Dear Governor Romney:

The National Coalition on Benefits (NCB) thanks you for your commitment to public service and applaud the contributions you have already made to the critical debate about how to improve America's healthcare system.

The NCB is a new coalition of over 125 employers and employer associations that represent companies which voluntarily provide health, retirement and other valuable benefits to over 100 million Americans under the legal framework established by the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). The members of NCB believe the federal standard of ERISA is a critical cornerstone to the viability of the employment-based health care system because it allows employers the ability to offer equal benefits to their employees, retirees and families across state lines. ERISA also preserves each employer's ability to offer and maintain equal benefit plans across state and local lines, an important factor for the many employers that cover beneficiaries in more than one state or locality.

We are urging all of the presidential candidates to remember that any efforts to weaken or eliminate the federal ERISA standard (also called "preemption") would do serious damage to an employer's ability to provide health benefits to millions of Americans.

There are over 100 million employees in "ERISA plans." Because their employers can provide consistent national plans, the benefits provided to employees are not subject to change when employees transfer from one state to another, their benefits are not subject to the confusion wrought by living in one state, working in another, and going to a doctor or hospital in yet another, nor are they subject to the confusing patchwork of mandates, restrictions, and costly rules that vary from state to state.

For many years, the American people have sent two clear messages to elected officials about America's healthcare system. First, Americans want to see change and improvements in both the cost and access to health care. And, second, Americans like the health benefits they receive through their employer. The NCB believes the American people are right about both points: We do need change. Such change should not erode the part of the health care system that is working. ERISA and its federal framework allows employers to offer equal, affordable and manageable benefits regardless of where their employees and retirees live and work. ERISA should not be changed.

The NCB website www.coalitiononbenefits.org has additional information on how ERISA works and why it is important. If you or your staff have any questions or want more materials, please feel to contact NCB Chairman Martin Reiser at (202) 414-1291.

Thank you again for your commitment and contribution to America.

Sincerely

Martin Reiser, Chairman
The National Coalition on Benefits.