

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 19, 2010

The Honorable Ted Strickland  
Riffe Center, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215-6108

Dear Governor Strickland:

We write to you today to express our concern over revelations that the Obama Administration has, as part of its implementation of President Obama's controversial health overhaul, approved in at least two states the creation of federally-funded "high-risk" pool health plans that would cover elective abortion as a medical benefit. We ask that you assure the people of Ohio that our state will not seek to implement such a plan, and urge you to exercise your authority as Governor to ensure that no taxpayer funds are used to cover elective abortions in Ohio.

Over the past week we have grown increasingly concerned by reports detailing state plans to use high-risk pools funded by federal taxpayer dollars under President Obama's health care law to offer abortion services. According to the Associated Press, the state of New Mexico planned to cover elective abortion services under its high-risk pool plan and had been advertising those benefits to enrollees since at least July 1, with the apparent consent of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Maryland and Pennsylvania also reportedly submitted similar plans. Our understanding is that Ohio has not yet submitted a final plan to the federal government.


Allowing a state high-risk pool to fund abortions would stand in direct contradiction of longstanding U.S. policy prohibiting federal funding of abortion or abortion coverage. Unfortunately, statutory language prohibiting such funding was not included in the health care overhaul signed into law by President Obama. Such language was stripped out of the final bill by Democratic congressional leaders, and the President instead signed an Executive Order that the White House claimed would eliminate the need for statutory language prohibiting federal funding of abortion through the health care law. However, more than three months after the law was signed, the Administration has not issued formal guidance to the states or answered congressional request for information on how the Executive Order will be implemented, even despite repeated requests made of HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and a direct request made to President Obama himself during a recent White House meeting.

In light of these disturbing developments, we are urging you to assure Ohioans that the final plan our state will submit to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services will not include elective abortion as a taxpayer-funded benefit. Furthermore we respectfully request that you direct the Ohio Department of Insurance to thoroughly review its negotiations with the third-party provider your administration designated to run Ohio's high-risk pool plan to ensure that the

use of federal funds to perform abortions is clearly and definitively prohibited under any coverage.

Ohioans were misled by the Obama Administration about the cost of the President's health care legislation, and they cannot be misled again when it comes to this unconscionable use of taxpayer dollars. Your voice as Governor is needed to help ensure that not a dime of the \$152 million in federal funds Ohio is set to receive for its high-risk pool plan goes toward covering abortions. We ask that you assure Ohioans that Ohio will not seek to use funds from the President's health care law to fund abortions.

Sincerely,


  
John A. Boehner  
United States Representative

  
Steven C. LaTourette  
United States Representative


  
Patrick J. Tiberi  
United States Representative

  
Jean Schmidt  
United States Representative

  
Michael R. Turner  
United States Representative

  
Jim Jordan  
United States Representative

  
Robert E. Latta  
United States Representative

  
Steve Austria  
United States Representative