



Senado de Puerto Rico
Hon. Thomas Rivera Schatz
Presidente

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2 de Febrero de 2010
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**Presidente del Senado logra compromiso del Presidente de Comisión de
Salud del Senado Federal para la inclusión de Puerto Rico en la
Reforma de Salud**

El Presidente del Senado Thomas Rivera Schatz se apuntó el compromiso del Presidente de la Comisión de Salud del Senado Federal, el Senador por Iowa Tom Harkin, de incluir a Puerto Rico en la reforma de salud del Presidente Barack Obama.

El pasado mes de noviembre el líder senatorial le cursó comunicación al presidente de la comisión de salud del senado federal exigiendo la inclusión de Puerto Rico dentro del plan de reforma de salud federal.

“Siempre he compartido tu creencia de que el acceso a la salud debe ser visto como un derecho humano, no como un privilegio... Estoy firmemente comprometido con el principio de que todo ciudadano americano, incluyendo aquellos residiendo en Puerto Rico y otros territorios, deberían tener acceso a un sistema de salud que esté al alcance de la ciudadanía.” Expresó el Presidente de la Comisión de Salud.

Desde principios del año 2009, el presidente senatorial ha realizado gestiones y cabildeado para que la propuesta de reforma de salud incluya el derecho de los cuatro millones de ciudadanos americanos en Puerto Rico a un mejor sistema de salud.

“Como presidente de la comisión de salud, continuaré la lucha por los ciudadanos que viven en los territorios y el derecho a un acceso igual a la salud. Le agradezco su carta y involucramiento en este tema tan importante y espero colaborar junto a ti en esta legislación histórica,” comunicó el Senador Harkin al presidente del senado de Puerto Rico.

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Hon. Thomas Rivera Schatz
PRESIDENT

November 9, 2009

*The Honorable Tom Harkin
Senator
U.S. Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
United State Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510*

Dear Senator Harkin:

In the history of nations there are issues, debates and proceedings that define the character of its leaders. The upcoming process in the U.S. Senate in considering the Healthcare Reform Bill is such a defining moment. I have met and exchanged letters with several United States Senators requesting the inclusion of language that will provide parity for the four million American citizens residing in the territory of Puerto Rico. Also, I have requested the adoption of language that will provide automatic enrollment for our American citizens residing in Puerto Rico into Medicare Part B, eliminating the blended hospital reimbursements under Medicare and, instead, providing 100% PPS payment.

American citizens residing in the territory of Puerto Rico have responded--with honors-- every time the Nation calls to defend our way of life and democracy in international conflicts. Thousands of our own paid the ultimate price responding to that call. Most recently, our Nation has been the champion in the protection of liberties and equal rights in the Balkans, in Iraq and Afghanistan, not to mention in two World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam. Despite the historical record of fighting for democracy and equality throughout the world, our Nation has, in the 21st century, an apartheid policy in the treatment of American citizens living in its territories.

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*Letter to the Hon. Tom Harkin
November 9, 2009
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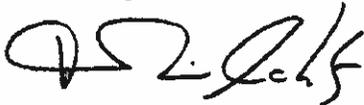
More than 4 million American citizens from Puerto Rico have been forced to immigrate to the states of the Union in search of the American dream and to be treated as equal. Does our Constitution follow the Flag? Evidently, the answer is no. Take as an example the fact that American citizens living in the Republic of Costa Rica are entitled to receive the Supplemental Social Security, but not in the territory of Puerto Rico. You get my drift.

President Barack Obama has expressed publicly, in many occasions that American citizens should be treated equally in their participation or benefits in federal programs. You, together with Senators John Kerry, Chuck Schumer, Bob Menéndez, Jeff Bingaman and Bill Nelson, have led the efforts in requesting the United States Senate to grant the parity treatment for U.S. Citizens residing in the territories. This is a historical defining moment and will provide the United States Senate and Congress an opportune time to fix the inequities of American citizens residing in the U.S. Territories. I have been fighting hard so that the access to healthcare is classified as a universal human right. The time for action is now!

The People of Puerto Rico appreciate the leadership exercised by you, the President and many others in promoting language in support of parity and equality in the Healthcare Reform Act before you. Please contact the U.S. Senate negotiators to include language in support of the four million American citizens residing in the territory of Puerto Rico.

Please, do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance on this important matter.

Sincerely,



*Thomas Rivera Schatz
President
Senate of Puerto Rico*

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January 29, 2010

The Honorable Thomas Rivera Schatz
The Capitol
PO Box 9023431
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00902-3431

Dear Senator Schatz:

Thank you so much for writing to me regarding your concerns about the health reform legislation currently pending before Congress. I always appreciate hearing from you.

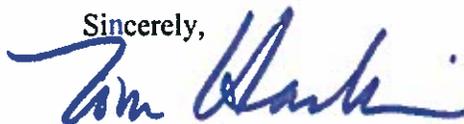
I have always shared your belief that access to health care should be a human right, and not a privilege. Accordingly, I strongly support comprehensive health reform legislation that guarantees access to quality, affordable health care for all American citizens – regardless of their health status, income, race, ethnicity, or where they happen to live. I am firmly committed to the principle that all American citizens, including those residing in Puerto Rico and other territories, should have access to affordable health care.

From a moral point of view, where an individual happens to live is an arbitrary factor; everyone deserves an equal opportunity to pursue their dreams. Simply put, it is unjust and unthinkable that 45,000 people die each year because they lack health insurance. Moreover, the growing number of the uninsured imposes costs that must ultimately be paid for by medical providers, insured individuals, businesses, and taxpayers. A guarantee of access to quality health care not only helps the uninsured, but ensures stability and security for all working families who today fear the loss of their coverage.

Therefore, it is imperative that we move forward to enact comprehensive health reform legislation. Such legislation will be a major improvement over the unacceptable status quo, and will lay a strong foundation for future reforms. As Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, I will continue to fight for citizens living in the territories and their equal right to have access to health care.

Thank you for your thoughtful letter and engagement on this important issue. I look forward to working with you on this historic legislation.

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin