



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

January 5, 2010

Brian Lamb
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, C-SPAN
400 N. Capitol St. NW
Suite 650
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Brian,

Thank you for your recent letter requesting that the American people have full access to health care reform negotiations. As House Republican Leader, I can confidently state that all House Republicans strongly endorse your proposal and stand ready to work with you to make it a reality.

C-SPAN's role in fostering government transparency is so significant that on several occasions during the last presidential campaign, then-Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) pledged that health care reform negotiations would be broadcast on C-SPAN so the "American people will know what's going on."

Unfortunately, the President, Speaker Pelosi, and Senate Majority Leader Reid now intend to shut out the American people at the most critical hour by skipping a bipartisan conference committee and hammering out a final health care bill in secret.

Of course, every issue of national import should be debated by the people's elected representatives in full public view, but this is especially true with something as personal and important as health care. Clocking in at a combined 4,765 pages, the House and Senate health care bills propose drastic and expensive changes in the way Americans live. Dozens of differences between the two bills have been identified, including fundamental changes to the patient-doctor relationship.

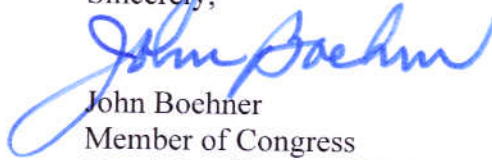
Hard-working families won't stand for having the future of their health care decided behind closed doors. These secret deliberations are a breeding ground for more of the kickbacks, shady deals and special-interest provisions that have become business as usual in Washington. Too much is at stake to have a final bill built on payoffs and pork-barrel spending.

As you know, congressional transparency has long been a concern of citizens and congressional observers, but never before has the need for reform been more apparent than in the past year under the Democratic majority. Republicans have listened to the American people and are committed to making Congress more accountable to the people it serves. In November, we

proposed a congressional transparency initiative, a series of reform measures that includes a resolution introduced by Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL) requiring that these health care negotiations be made open to the public. While you await a response from Speaker Pelosi, we will continue to call on her to allow a vote on Rep. Buchanan's resolution.

Since the first New England town meetings of the colonial era, open government has been a hallmark of American democracy. Over the last 30 years, C-SPAN has helped continue and strengthen that tradition. The American people are well served by your continued vigilance in this matter.

Sincerely,



John Boehner
Member of Congress
Republican Leader, U.S. House of Representatives