

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 3, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to respectfully request your assistance in efforts to enhance voluntary worksite health promotion programs by proclaiming the first full week of April 2009 (April 6th to April 12th) as National Workplace Wellness Week.

Such a proclamation will help to maximize employees' health and well-being, and lower health care costs for employers across our nation. It would also reinforce bipartisan legislation that we introduced and that passed the House without objection in September 2008 (H. Con. Res. 405), and as well as similar legislation that passed the U.S. Senate the same month by unanimous consent (S. Res. 673).

We introduced the resolution because we believe an effective strategy to address the primary driver of soaring health care costs requires an investment in prevention. Employers that provide health care coverage for more than 177,000,000 Americans have the potential to exert transformative leadership on this issue by increasing voluntarily the number, quality, and types of health promotion programs and policies at worksites across the nation.

- Employees can benefit from health promotion in the workplace through lower out-of-pocket medical costs, a reduced risk of developing chronic health conditions, and increased satisfaction with their jobs and lives.
- Some employers who invest in health promotion and disease prevention have achieved rates of return on investment ranging from \$3 to \$15 for each dollar invested.

The Healthy People 2010 initiative set a national health promotion and disease prevention goal that calls for at least 75% of U.S. employers to voluntarily offer comprehensive health promotion programs in the workplace. A 2004 survey shows that only about 7% of employers offer these programs to their employees. By issuing a proclamation, you will support efforts to improve the health and quality of life for Americans, and reduce health care costs that are posing a serious challenge to our nation's economic competitiveness.

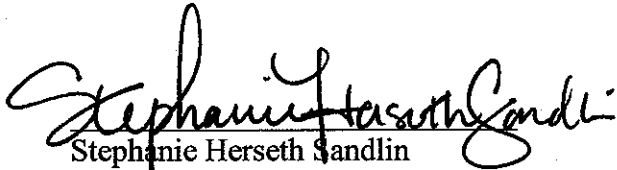
During "National Workplace Wellness Week," private and public employers will be encouraged to invest in the health of their employees by voluntarily creating worksite health programs and by sharing their experiences to help educate others. In fact, such a proclamation already has the strong support of private sector leaders who are members of the U.S. Workplace Wellness Alliance, including the American Heart Association, the


U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Partnership for Prevention. We have enclosed a letter of support for a proclamation signed by over forty members of the Alliance.

In summary, we believe a presidential proclamation can play an important role, in conjunction with House and Senate action, and the private sector, promoting the health of Americans across the nation, while also lowering health care costs for business.

If you have any questions, please ask your staff to contact Josh Albert in Rep. Herseth Sandlin's office at 202-225-2801 or Mike Thompson in Rep. Boustany's office at 202-225-2031. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Stephanie Herseth Sandlin
Member of Congress


Charles W. Boustany, Jr., MD
Member of Congress