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FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS LAUD PASSAGE OF SWEEPING HEALTH CARE REFORMS

Statement by

Joe Hansen, President of United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)

Washington DC— Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed health care reforms that will better serve all Americans. Thanks to the commitment of President Obama and Democratic Members of Congress, we now have reform legislation that has eluded our nation's grasp for a century.

This is an achievement that will rank among the highest in our national experience.

For the countless hard-working families across the country suffering at the hands of our nation's badly broken health care system, the passage of this bill represents an unprecedented leap forward in the struggle to ensure all Americans have access to affordable health care—and makes good on President Obama's promise to lead our country through the difficult challenges facing the American people on this issue.

With the passage of this bill comes an end to the worst of insurance company abuses. No longer will Americans have to fear being denied health insurance due to pre-existing conditions. There will be no more lifetime limits on the dollar value of benefits. No more will insurance companies be allowed to retroactively cancel insurance coverage when a policy holder becomes ill.

Aside from reigning in insurance company greed, the bill also extends coverage to millions of Americans who would otherwise go without, reduces prescription drug costs for seniors, while encouraging employers to fulfill their obligation of providing benefits to their workers.

UFCW members participated in the health care debate in nearly every congressional district across the country. They made calls and wrote letters, rallied and marched, visited district offices and traveled to Washington D.C., to meet with elected representatives. UFCW members won't forget the representatives who voted "yes" on these reforms and stood with working people and families rather than the insurance company lobbyists.

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The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) represents more than 1.3 million workers, primarily in the retail and meatpacking, food processing and poultry industries. It is the largest union of young workers with more than forty percent of our members under the age of thirty. The UFCW protects the rights of workers and strengthens America's middle class by fighting for living wages, retirement security, safe working conditions, health care and immigration reform, and the right to unionize so that working men and women and their families can realize the American Dream. For more information about the UFCW's effort to protect workers' rights and strengthen America's middle class, visit www.ufcw.org.