

National Puerto Rican Coalition Supports President on Health Bill

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SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO – Saying that “Hispanics have more at stake in the health care reform debate than any other group simply because we’re least likely to be insured,” the new President and CEO of the National Puerto Rican Coalition this morning urged Senators to “keep working” on getting the required 60 votes necessary for cloture and final passage of the health care reform legislative package being assembled by Majority Leader Harry Reid.

“According to the U.S. Census Bureau, fully one-third of Hispanics have no health insurance, a situation that’s existed for at least a decade,” said Miguel Lausell, who was chosen last month to head the 32-year old Coalition. “That’s why Hispanics have five words for those Senators who are tempted to walk away from the President’s historic effort: *‘By all means, keep working!’*”

“Under the President’s bold leadership and thanks to the courage and persistent work of Democrats in both the House and Senate, we are closer today than ever before to extending medical care to millions of Hispanics and their children who now don’t have it,” Lausell said.

Lausell continued, “instead of walking away from the table, we urge every Senator to redouble his or her own efforts to find common ground so that the legislative process can move forward and the President’s principal domestic priority can be achieved.”

“We ask that Republicans also recognize their responsibility to meet the needs of their Latino constituents,” Lausell said. “If they are serious about becoming competitive for Hispanic support, they should know the impact the issue has upon us and that we are watching this process carefully.”

“While the NPRC shares many of the concerns of those who prefer elements of the House-passed version to many of those in the alternative versions that have been under discussion in the Senate -- and while we are deeply disturbed by the failure of either version to address critical questions concerning immigrant care, we believe the process must go forward, so that improvements can be made in Conference,” Lausell concluded. The National Puerto Rican Coalition is an association of community leaders and organizations that addresses public policy issues of importance to the 8 million Puerto Rican U.S. citizens, promoting awareness of Puerto Rican community issues and concerns at the national level.

Incorporated as a membership organization in 1977, the NPRC is the nation’s leading Puerto Rican public policy and advocacy organization.

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