

September 4, 2008

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 840 (Kuehl) – **SUPPORT**

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCL) views health care as a fundamental human right and urges your approval of **SB 840**, which replaces the current patchwork of health care services with a health care plan that covers everyone. Please consider the following:

California has over 6.5 million people without health insurance and millions more are underinsured. Not having health insurance is a drag on the economy and stresses government services. Though we spend more than any other industrialized nation on health care, we have less to show for it because our system wastes about 30 percent of every health care dollar on administrative overhead. Contrarily, a single-payer would reduce administrative overhead to about five percent of every health care dollar. With the savings applied to the delivery of health care services, we can afford to provide every Californian with good health care.

Senate Bill 840 does not create a “government-run” health care system. The delivery of health care services would remain private. Patients would be free to choose their own health care providers. Instead of cherry picking those consumers they would cover, health care providers would be free to compete on the basis of the services they provide. As a result, Senate Bill 840 increases consumer choice.

Senate Bill 840 is business-friendly. Only those businesses which currently pay nothing would see their costs increase and most would see reductions. Doctors and hospitals would no longer have to treat patients without insurance, which results in passing the costs of their treatment on those with insurance.

SB 840 promotes efficiency. In addition to reducing administrative overhead, by harnessing the bulk purchasing power of the State for prescription drugs and capital equipment, SB 840 would reduce costs. By making primary care available to all Californians, this legislation would reduce the need for expensive emergency room treatment.

Practicality should triumph over ideology. You have a rare historic opportunity to greatly improve the lives and well-being of all Californians. Good stewardship demands nothing less. For these reasons FCL urges your approval of SB 840.

Sincerely yours,

JIM LINDBURG
Legislative Director

Cc: Senator Sheila Kuehl