



September 19, 2005

The Honorable Charles Grassley, Chairman
The Honorable Max Baucus, Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Baucus:

I am writing to express the support of the American Benefits Council for the Emergency Health Care Relief Act of 2005, a bill to provide much needed support for the health care needs of the many thousands of displaced persons and businesses in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The American Benefits Council is a trade association whose members are large employers and other organizations that either sponsor or administer health and retirement benefits for more than 100 million Americans.

Your legislation would expedite enrollment in Medicaid and provide emergency federal funding for state Medicaid programs as they are responding to the health care needs of Katrina survivors. Importantly, your legislation would also help to continue employer-sponsored health coverage for those who have been unable to continue premium payments due to the disaster. We agree that both sources of assistance are needed. In particular, by providing temporary assistance to help maintain employment-based coverage, your legislation should help to ease the financial burdens on Medicaid and will help make sure this vital safety net program is available to those who may have no other source of health coverage.

We join you in urging your colleagues to expedite the consideration of this emergency health care relief legislation and stand with you in helping to ensure that the survivors of Hurricane Katrina receive health care services during this critical time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James A. Klein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

James A. Klein
President