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December 3, 2009

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare's millions of members and supporters, I am pleased to endorse the amendment of Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado which clarifies that H.R. 3590, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*, would improve the Medicare program as part of health care reform.

Senator Bennet's amendment puts into law two of the most important criteria the National Committee has been using when analyzing health care reform proposals. First, it states explicitly that the legislation would not reduce any of Medicare's guaranteed benefits. Second, it ensures that savings from Medicare would be used to improve Medicare. Improvements in H.R. 3590 include extending the solvency of the Medicare trust funds by five years, reducing the amount of future increases in premiums, eliminating cost-sharing for preventive benefits, making prescription drugs more affordable, and ensuring access to Medicare providers.

Protecting Medicare and Social Security has been the National Committee's key mission since our founding 27 years ago and remains our top priority today. Our members are no different than seniors all over this country who are nervous about rising out-of-pocket health care costs and are concerned about the Medicare savings in health care reform legislation. This is a legitimate concern, but it is important to put these savings in perspective. The federal government will spend almost \$9 trillion on Medicare in the next decade. The proposed savings of nearly \$500 billion mean that the growth in spending will be reduced by about two percent over the next 10 years by eliminating wasteful spending and outright fraud.

The H.R. 3590, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*, includes savings that are designed to protect Medicare beneficiaries and improve the Medicare program. Senator Bennet's amendment expressly prohibits any reductions in guaranteed Medicare benefits and makes sure all savings are reinvested back into Medicare. I urge you to support the Bennet amendment which is important to Medicare beneficiaries and the solvency of the Medicare program.

Cordially,

Barbara B. Kennelly
President & CEO