

Local Action for National Change

A Guide to In-District Lobbying
Summer Recess: August 1st – September 4th



campusprogress.org

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OVERVIEW

We are just six months into a new administration, but our elected officials are busier than ever. Congress is either in the process of debating, or have already voted on: the stimulus, the budget, health care, climate, college affordability, hate crimes, and Supreme Court nominations.; Washington, DC is knee deep in opportunities to push forward a strongly progressive agenda in a way that we haven't seen since FDR entered the White House.

But now our vision for economic opportunity is in jeopardy of being stalled, watered down, and picked apart by old school politics and leaders afraid to act on the agenda that *we* voted for. Those same leaders are coming home to a district near you.

The time is now for young people to do what we do best – use our passion, energy, and dogged determination to remind America how powerful we are and how necessary it is to use this critical moment in our history to build our economic future. Now is not the time for Congress to be passive, partisan, obstructive, or afraid. So let's show them how it's done.

TAKE ACTION:

We're going to be proactive, unified, and loud this August, march into our elected official's offices and demand that they:

- Pass bold climate legislation that makes polluters pay, invests in the rapid deployment of clean energy technology and reduces emissions at the level determined by science.
- Enact a historic proposal to eliminate wasteful subsidies to student loan companies, and use the \$87 billion in savings to make college more affordable and expand educational opportunity for all Americans.
- Pass strong health care reform legislation that provides health care for all and gives a choice of a public plan, ensures affordability, and includes preventive benefits and equal access for all.

This toolkit is designed to give you some tips on how to make your visit with your Congressperson effective from start to finish. Whether you've never lobbied before or have a desk named after you in your Senator's office, in-district visits are the perfect way to make sure that when Congress returns to Washington they do so knowing the demands of their constituents – especially young voters, the people that turned the 2008 election upside down.

It's time to support those that support us, challenge those that don't, and most importantly, don't give up the fight. Let's make this an August recess to remember!

Sincerely,

The Campus Progress Advocacy Team

Erica, Natasha, Pedro, Tanya, and Tommaso

PLAN OF ACTION



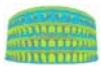
STEP 1:

Call your legislators' district offices (find out how at house.gov and senate.gov) and ask for the direct phone number, fax number, and email address of the appointment secretary or scheduler.



STEP 2:

Email, fax, AND call to request a meeting at the legislators' district office. Make sure to suggest specific times and dates (check out the sample invitation in **APPENDIX I**). The summer in-district work period is between August 1 and September 5 2009.



STEP 3:

If you are inviting your legislators to an event, book a venue – reserve the largest room in your community for every day you have available during the congressional recess. You want to make sure that whatever time that works for your representative works for you.



STEP 4:

Contact Campus Progress at organize@campusprogress.org to help you set up a meeting, deal with messaging, targeting, media, visibility and other logistics for the event.

TIPS AND TRICKS

1. Be polite and patient – schedulers are the gatekeepers for congressional offices.
2. Follow up every two days both via phone and/or e-mail until you get an answer.
3. Do your research! Learn about your representative's interests and background ahead of time so you can personalize your letters and phone calls and increase the likelihood of receiving a response.

SAMPLE IN-DISTRICT MEETING AGENDA (based on a 30 minute meeting)

Meetings with elected representatives vary in structure, agenda, and content. You could be meeting directly with the legislator or with a member of their staff; you could have 5, 10 or even more than 30 minutes; you could be meeting them in their office, in a conference room, or at your organization's meeting space. Make sure to prepare for the meeting, research your legislator's position on the issues, his/her committee assignments, and make sure everybody in the room knows their role in the meeting.

1. **Introductions** (5 minutes)

All students introduce themselves with full name, hometown/school.

Meeting overview – Explain that you asked for the meeting to speak out in support of bold progressive policies to restore economic opportunity for our generation by making college more accessible, healthcare more affordable, and by solving the climate crisis and creating millions of clean energy jobs.

2. **Personal Stories** (10 Minutes)

Have 1-3 people tell a personal story about how they are impacted by these issues (e.g. can't pay for healthcare, graduating with tons of loans, family's house destroyed by severe weather) and why their legislators should support progressive policies to fix these problems. Stay personal - don't get wonky.

3. **The Ask** (10 minutes)

Make a hard ask for the issue/s you are lobbying about (e.g. "*will you support a strong climate bill without handouts to polluters?*") Film the response if possible. Respond strategically to move supporters to become champions, undecideds to supporters, opponents to side-sitters. Figure out what parts of the policy they do not support, if any, and defend your progressive priorities.

4. **Closing** (5 minutes)

Thank them for the meeting and tell them you wish to follow-up next time they will be in district.

IMPORTANT: Before you leave, ask if you can take a picture with the Representative or Senator.

Taking a picture with them will give you extra time to repeat your ask and to build your relationship.

ROLES:

- **The Facilitator:** Leads introduction, meeting overview and closing.
- **The Storytellers:** Delivers personal message, speaks to why legislator should act and why acting is in best interest of the constituents.
- **The Pitcher:** Makes the hard ask and is prepared to respond depending on what legislator says.
- **The Recorder:** Takes comprehensive notes on what the legislator says. See **APPENDIX III** for a sample Report Back Form.
- **Volunteers:** Fill the room and show strong support for progressive policies.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE GRASSROOTS LOBBYING

1. **Know your agenda and roles going in.** How will the conversation flow? Who does what? Check out the sample agenda on page 4 for some ideas about timing and roles.
2. **Who you are matters. Tell your story.** Why do you care about progressive policy, and why are you moved to act?
3. **Deliver a clear, compelling message.** Your message isn't just a list of bulleted policy points, but should address why the member of Congress should care and why your proposed solution is in the constituents' best interest.
4. **Demonstrate your power.** The Millennial generation is 50 million strong. We're ¼ of the potential electorate right now and will be 1/3 by 2015. We're extremely active and very politically savvy. We're not going away. And we vote.
5. **Politely control the conversation.** Remember what you came for. Politicians and their staff often control conversations with small talk, bringing up stories tangentially connected to the issue at hand, and asking questions they know you can't answer. Stay focused on your agenda and diplomatically move the conversation where you want it to go.
6. **Make a hard ask.** "Can we count on you to support the principles we've laid out?"
7. **Be strategic in your response to their position.** Thank supporters and help turn them into champions. If you can, give undecideds the information they need to become supporters, or commit to follow-up with information that you do not have on-hand. Neutralize the opposition if possible, but don't waste too much time trying to argue with them.
8. **Do:** Stay positive, talk about the public interest, view this as an educational process, and take the long view (no permanent enemies, no permanent friends).
9. **Don't:** Whine, threaten, bluff, misrepresent the facts, malign the opposition, personalize differences of opinion, or burn bridges.
10. **Saying "I don't know" is not a crime.** It's always OK to say that you don't know but you will follow up with an answer they are looking for. You don't have to be a policy expert to be effective.
11. **Remember: Rome wasn't built in a day.** You're not going to get everything you want out of this meeting. It's the beginning of a critical relationship that will ultimately move your representative over time.
12. **Look out for deflections:** Legislators like to blame others for inaction, whether it's their more conservative colleagues or other branches of government. Make sure that you keep the emphasis on what **THEY** can do to help your cause, like supporting more ambitious targets, co-sponsoring legislation, introducing amendments, or making an effort to convince like-minded colleagues.

This section was developed with the help of trainings from Wellstone Action. You can learn more about Wellstone Action at wellstone.org.

SHOW YOUR STRENGTH

When you visit your member of Congress, it is a good idea to show that you have substantial support behind you.

SIZE (AND DIVERSITY) MATTERS

The most effective way to get your message across and be taken seriously is to bring as many people as possible to your meetings. If the office tells you there is a size limit, ask them for more meetings or for a larger room. It's not all about quantity though; the kind of people you bring matters just as much. You want people of all backgrounds and all interests to show that there is broad support for our progressive priorities. It's more effective to bring five people who represent various campus orgs to back you up rather than bringing ten members from your campus environmental group.

MEDIA SUPERSTAR

Show your representative that your group is often in the public eye by bringing a binder with all of the media hits, flyers, and campaign materials that you and your group have compiled throughout the years. These materials show the legislators that you are already implementing change in your community and that you are talking to others in the process. Nothing shows power like your ability to organize and get others to care about your work.

STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

Statements of support signed by student and faculty groups in your community significantly strengthen your message. You can seek statements of support from:

- Student government president
- Student government legislative directors
- Prominent faculty, especially from pertinent departments
- Environmental student organizations
- Student labor groups
- Financial aid directors
- Student newspaper editorial board
- Progressive student organizations
- Student groups responsible for voter registration or GOTV efforts in 2008
- Alumni association
- Staff, graduate student, and/or faculty union
- Community leaders
- Religious leaders

TESTIMONIALS

Collect testimonials from friends, family, and co-workers about how they are impacted by the rising cost of higher education, lack of healthcare coverage, and/or the climate crisis. Encourage them to either **write a brief letter** or **record a short video** that you can show your member of Congress during a meeting. Check out Campus Progress Action's I'm Voting For campaign at youtube.com/campusprogressaction for some great examples of video testimonials.

GET CREATIVE

Another way to show that there is significant support for a progressive budget is to use your creativity. Here are a few things you can do to help your member of Congress remember the meeting:

- **Progressive Baked Goods:** Bake some goodies using cookie cutters shaped like windmills, graduation hats and red crosses, design a nice package for them with progressive messaging, and offer them to the member of Congress during the meeting.
- **Signs of Progress:** Have students on campus take a picture holding a handwritten sign with a personal message to the member about how they are impacted by the climate crisis, the lack of healthcare and the extreme cost of higher education and deliver them in-person to your member of Congress.



- **Giant Petition:** Get students on campus to sign a giant petition, and deliver it in-person to your member of Congress (e.g. a giant cap and gown as a college affordability petition)
- **Rallies, Street Theatre & Flash Mobs:** You might have a hard time getting a meeting with your representative, but that's no reason to give up trying to be heard. District offices are great places for demonstrations, flash mobs, and other media-savvy events.

WHAT'S NEXT?

REPORT BACK TO CAMPUS PROGRESS

Everything you find out about your legislator and their position on progressive issues will be helpful to Campus Progress and our partner organizations. In-district lobby meetings have the dual purpose of influencing your legislator with your stories and to collect information about their stances to help progressive groups strategize effectively. Make sure that your recorder prints out the form in **APPENDIX III**, fills it out and returns it to organize@campusprogress.org.

SEND FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

TO THE LEGISLATOR

Grassroots lobbying is like starting a relationship: if you were trying to impress someone, you wouldn't stop talking to them after the first date! Send a follow-up letter to thank your legislators for showing up and sharing their time. Be creative with it—the congressional offices would be delighted to receive a hand-crafted card. Check out a sample follow-up e-mail in **APPENDIX II**.

TO THE ATTENDEES

The people you bring with you at the meeting are your wing-persons. You are going to need their help again as you work to strengthen your relationship with your elected officials. Send them a thank you e-mail and encourage them to remain involved in the cause. By the time you graduate you will have empowered others leaders to build their own relationships with your legislators. Check out a sample follow-up e-mail in **APPENDIX II**.

KEEP UP THE PRESSURE

Think you're done? Think again! There will be many more opportunities to communicate with your representative. Here are some suggestions about how to keep up the pressure after your in-district meeting:

- Join the Campus Progress Network at campusprogress.org/cpnetwork to connect with hundreds of other young progressives and receive more Campus Progress resources.
- Organize a letter-writing drive when important bills are introduced.
- Write letters to the editor and op-eds about your lobbying experience, important legislative controversies, or your local organizing victories. If they get published, send your media clips to your legislators with a note reminding them about your asks. Campus Progress can help - just get in touch at organize@campusprogress.org!
- Creatively engage district offices throughout the year by organizing flash mobs, rallies, and other fun actions in front of them. Make sure to also organize events to thank legislators when they vote the right way as they are likely to get a lot of push-back from the conservative media.

APPENDIX I – INVITATION SCRIPTS AND LETTERS

SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER

{Use your organization’s logo or letterhead if you have one. Only use a Campus Progress logo after contacting organize@campusprogress.org for permission}

Dear **[Representative/Senator Last Name]**,

On behalf of **[insert your organization or group name here]**, we would like to request a meeting with you at **[the closest district office]** over the Congressional recess in August. Across the country, young people like us are mobilizing to ask Congress to fulfill President Obama’s vision of a strong clean energy economy, affordable higher education, and a quality healthcare system. We are concerned that Congress isn’t moving fast enough on these extremely important issues that shape our generation’s economic opportunity.

As you know, young people voted in record numbers in the last election. We are working with Campus Progress, the Energy Action Coalition, the United States Student Association, US PIRG, and many other groups to organize thousands of young people to organize meetings in every Congressional district in the country. As your constituents, our top priority is to address these issues to **[insert city or region]**.

Our organization has already been working in **[insert school or city]** to promote **[insert 2 sentences on your local work]**.

As young voters concerned for our economy, country, and climate, we want legislation to:

- **Enact a fair program to reduce carbon emissions:** The American Clean Energy and Security Act must be strengthened by mandating reductions in global warming pollution of 25% by 2020 relative to 1990 levels as science demands, restoring the EPA’s authority over aging coal power plants, strengthening the Renewable and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards, and by eliminating giveaways to polluting industries.
- **Revitalize our higher education:** End the wasteful FFELP program to cut out the middleman and use the saved money to expand the Pell Grant award and peg it to inflation, reform the Perkins Loan program, and to create a \$2.5 billion fund supporting state-federal partnerships that help disadvantaged students access a higher education.
- **Fix our broken health care system:** Provide quality, affordable health care to all U.S. residents by creating a public health insurance option, providing subsidies to low-income families and small businesses to purchase coverage, rewarding providers based on quality (not quantity) of care, and ensuring equal access to health care.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing back from with your availability.

Sincerely,

[Name of all expected attendees]

SAMPLE INVITATION PHONE SCRIPT

Introduction:

Hi,

My name is [your name] and I am a constituent from [town where you go to school]. On behalf of [insert your organization or group name here] I would like to request a meeting with [Senator X/Representative X] over the Congressional recess in August. When would he/she be available to [come to campus / meet with us]?

If asked: “What issues you would like to meet about?”

Across the country, young people like us are mobilizing to ask Congress to fulfill President Obama’s vision of a strong clean energy economy, affordable higher education, and a quality healthcare system. We are concerned that Congress isn’t moving fast enough on these extremely important issues that shape our generation’s economic opportunities.

If scheduler seems uninterested/unresponsive:

As you know, young people voted in record numbers in the last election so now we are organizing ourselves to make sure that our elected officials are working towards the change that we voted for. We are working with many other groups including Campus Progress, the United States Student Association, the Energy Action Coalition, and the US PIRGs to organize thousands of meetings in every Congressional district in the country. As your constituents, our top priority is to address these issues to [insert city or region].

If unable to come to the campus:

We are sorry to hear that. We would still like to use this opportunity to meet with our representative while [she/he] is home. Can we schedule a brief in-person visit at [his/her] office? There are [10, 30, 50, 100] young people in my group that are excited about this opportunity.

Close:

Thank you very much for your time, we look forward to seeing [Senator X/Congressman/woman X] on [date, time] at [venue/office]. Have a fantastic day.

APPENDIX II – THANK YOU LETTERS

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO LEGISLATORS

Dear **[Representative/Senator Last Name]**,

I am writing to thank you for meeting with the delegation from **[your college/university/community]** on **[date]** at your office in **[city/town]**. With so many important issues that will affect our generation’s future hanging in the balance—like climate change, health care, and college access and affordability—we are happy that we had a chance to discuss the importance of passing bold progressive policies.

The U.S., once a world leader in educating its citizens, is now lagging behind other countries. This is bad news for the millions of young people who will never get the education they need to be successful, and it also spells trouble for our country’s long-term economic health. You can help put our education system on sure footing by ending wasteful subsidies to student loan companies, reforming and expanding the Pell grant and Perkins loan programs, and creating federal-state partnerships for access and completion.

Another challenge our generation faces is global warming and other environmental problems caused by dirty industries like coal and other fossil fuels. Young people will inherit the consequences of global warming. The American Clean Energy and Security Act recently passed in the house is a great first step, but it needs to be much stronger if we hope to put Americans back to work building a clean energy economy that is strong enough to create good local jobs, revitalize our manufacturing sector, and lift people out of poverty.

Finally, neither the long-term economy nor the well-being of thousands of young people will survive without both a dramatic expansion of health care coverage and policies that will lower health care costs.

We urge you to support these important policies and become a champion for young people in the **[House/Senate]**. All of us who visited your office will remain engaged in this issue, and will be in touch about how we can help to build a prosperous, free, and just America.

Sincerely,

First Last
Title, Organization
University/College
E-Mail Address
Phone Number



FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Dear **[Names]**,

I wanted to thank you for all of your help in planning for and attending the meeting with **[Senator/Representative Last Name]** on **[date]**.

By meeting with **[Representative/Senator Last Name]**, we joined a nationwide movement to transform the priorities of the government. Your involvement has gone a long way in building momentum for strong progressive policies on college affordability and access, health care, and the climate crisis.

There is still plenty for us to do, however. Progressives in the House and Senate are facing unprecedented opposition from their more conservative colleagues and legislation that affects our generation's future is constantly under attack. We need to make sure that we continue to engage Congress and the public, and counter the influence of special interest groups like the dirty coal or student loan industries.

I would love to continue working with all of you to make sure that our voices are heard in the halls of Congress. I will be in touch about other ways to be involved, and am excited to hear what ideas you have to continue working for progressive change.

Sincerely,

First Last

E-Mail Address

Phone Number

PS: One great way to remain involved in this issue is to join the Campus Progress Network to get access to resources to organize your campaigns, stay informed, and connect with other young progressives throughout the nation. You can get more info here: campusprogress.org/cpnetwork

APPENDIX III – REPORT BACK FORM

Please fill in all of the following information after each meeting. Include staff e-mail addresses or contact information in the “Additional Notes” section below.

RETURN THIS FORM:

EMAIL TO – tboggia@americanprogress.org

FAX TO (202) 898 - 2590 ATTN: Tommaso Boggia, Campus Progress

MAIL IT TO: Tommaso Boggia
 Campus Progress, Center for American Progress
 1333 H St. NW, Washington D.C. 20005

Your Name: _____

Member of Congress: _____

Congressional Staff in Attendance: _____

Response to Climate Asks:

- Ensuring accountability and oversight for old dirty coal plants (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Improving the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Standards (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Increase short-term emission reduction targets to at least 25% below 1990 levels as science demands (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Eliminate giveaways to oil and coal and use allowances to invest in clean energy (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____

Response to Health Care Asks:

- A public health insurance plan (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Affordable coverage for every person, family, and business (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Comprehensive health care benefits from prevention to chronic care (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Equity in health care access, treatment, research, and resources to people and communities of color (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____

Response to College Affordability lobby asks:

- Increasing the maximum Pell grant and tying it to the Consumer Price Index (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Originating all future federal student loans through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Reform and Expand the Perkins Loan Program (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____
- Ensuring that all student loan servicers have to go through a competitive bidding process (Yes | No)
 – Why? _____

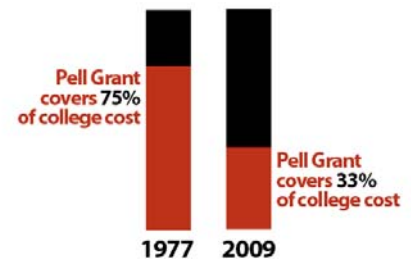
← Please add further notes on the back

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY ASKS (TO BE DELIVERED AT THE END OF THE MEETING)

Dear **[Representative/Senator Last Name]**,

We are concerned that too many talented young people are being left behind, especially those from low-income or minority families. The most academically prepared low-income high school graduates go to school at about the same rate as the least prepared students from wealthy families. Young people who do attend college face unprecedented levels of student debt. Nearly one in four public college graduates, and four in ten graduates from private colleges, have student debt levels that would be unmanageable at the starting average salary of a teacher.

President Obama recently proposed a plan that would cut wasteful subsidies to student loan companies, and use the \$87 billion in savings to expand educational opportunity and make college more affordable. The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA)—a bill in the House of Representatives that closely follows the president’s plan—would help millions of young people, and take a big step toward making the U.S. a world leader in higher education once again. Please support strong legislation like SAFRA that would:



- Increase the maximum Pell grant award to \$5,550 for the 2010-11 school year, and tie the maximum award to one percent above the Consumer Price Index for future years.
- Create state/federal partnerships for college access and completion rates.
- Originate future federal student loans through the Direct Loan Program.
- Simplify the FAFSA form to make the financial aid process less daunting for students and families.
- Reform and expand the Perkins Loan Program, and change the formula to encourage institutional need-based aid and lower tuition.
- Invest in infrastructure, access, and completion at community colleges and historically black colleges and universities.
- Make interest rates for subsidized Stafford loan variable below a 6.8% interest rate cap.

We do have concerns about one provision in SAFRA. Please do what you can to:

- Ensure that all contracts for servicing federal student loans be award through a competitive bidding process based on cost and quality. Non-profit state-affiliated lenders should not receive no-bid contracts. No-bid contracts lead to low quality servicing for borrowers and affordable prices for taxpayers.

Please support SAFRA, which represents the largest expansion in educational opportunity in U.S. history, and a big step toward preparing our generation for a 21st century economy.

Again, thank you for your time and sincere consideration.

Sincerely,



CLIMATE CHANGE ASKS (TO BE DELIVERED AT THE END OF THE MEETING)

Dear **[Representative/Senator]** _____,

Last November, young people voted in record numbers hoping for a change in direction and a brighter future than we are faced with today. We demanded affordable schools, universal health care, green jobs, and an end to the climate crisis. Since then, millions of us have been working on our campuses and in our communities to turn these promises into a reality. Young people deserve to have a healthy and prosperous future and we are here to ask you to help us achieve it.

Our generation will be defined by how we begin addressing the climate crisis today. This issue impacts our ability to recover from the current recession by investing in clean energy jobs and determines the odds of seeing more disastrous and frequent severe weather events that threaten our homes, our agricultural output, and our national security. The Millennial generation needs a *strong* and just climate bill to protect its future and provide millions of new good jobs in clean energy deployment and operations. **[Representatives only: We commend the House for getting us started on this process by passing the American Clean Energy and Security Act, but we know that much more must be done to protect our generation from the worst effects of the climate crisis].**

[Senate Only: As your constituent, I request that, in light of the passage of the American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R. 2454) in the House, you push for a stronger Senate climate bill that:]

[House Only: As your constituent, I request that you support a stronger climate bill from the Senate, especially provisions to:]

- Ensures accountability and oversight for old dirty coal plants;
- Improves the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Standards to spur innovation, manufacturing and rapid deployment of clean technologies;
- Increases short-term emission reduction targets to at least 25% below 1990 levels as science demands;
- Eliminates giveaways to oil and coal and use allowances to invest in clean energy and jobs transition programs;

The global community is waiting for us to take action on this monumental crisis and us based on the strength of our climate legislation. The United States is responsible for the most emissions in history, and has a moral imperative to take the lead rather than blaming other countries for inaction. Let's join the world community in Copenhagen this December with a bill that we can be proud of.

Sincerely,

HEALTH CARE ASKS (TO BE DELIVERED AT THE END OF THE MEETING)

Dear Representative/Senator _____,

I am a young person writing to ensure that Congress passes strong health care reform in September and that you are a part of making that happen. Health care reform cannot wait or afford any more delays; now is the time.

Health care reform is about finally assuring that my generation, which makes up one-third of the uninsured, does not have to worry about whether or not we can afford to see a doctor when we get sick. It's about making preventive care and primary care accessible and affordable. My generation suffers more than most in this health care crisis and we have the most to lose from Congress' failure to reform the broken health care system. We will benefit most from a system that guarantees affordable access to all Americans. The Millennial generation needs a strong health care bill now.

As your constituent, I request that you support bold health care reform legislation that includes:

- A public health insurance plan that ensures coverage for all;
- Affordable coverage for every person, family, and business - costs based on ability to pay;
- Comprehensive health care benefits from prevention to chronic care;
- Equity in access, treatment, research, and resources to people and communities of color;

Politicians who stand in the way of real reform are playing games with my health care. I am deeply troubled by the recent proposals made by some problematic conservative Democrats. The stated demands of these Members – and the threat to block health care reform if they are not met – would effectively gut core elements of health care reform, such as:

- Pull affordability protections out from under millions of middle-income families, and cut assistance to lower-income families.
- Prevent the public health insurance option from sparking competition into the highly-concentrated health insurance market, and weaken the ability of the public health insurance option to provide an affordable alternative for individuals and small businesses.

I encourage those Conservative members who have threatened to block health care reform to reconsider. A vote against bold reform is a vote against making health care affordable, against ending denials for pre-existing conditions, against stopping insurance company abuses, and against skyrocketing premiums and shrinking coverage. I encourage you keep this in mind during recess and return to Congress ready to keep **[For Senators: The Affordable Health Choices Act/ For Representatives: America's Affordable Health Choices Act]** strong and pass the legislation for the future health and economic stability of my generation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

ONLINE RESOURCES

1. Wellstone Action organizing tools: wellstone.org/organizing-tools
 - Learn the skills you need to make progressive social change.
2. Students Over Banks: studentsoverbanks.org
 - Learn more about the fight for more affordable and accessible higher education.
3. Health Care for America NOW!: healthcareforamericanow.org
 - Learn more about health care policy from a strong national coalition.
4. PowerShift '09 Campaign: powershift09.org
 - Learn more about the national movement to end the climate crisis.

ABOUT CAMPUS PROGRESS

Here are just a few ways to get more involved with Campus Progress:

- Join the Campus Progress Network at campusprogress.org/cpnetwork to get access to tons of incredible event planning, campaign organizing, writing, and movement-building resources.
- Sign up for our weekly mailing on the home page of campusprogress.org for the latest articles, blog posts, events, and announcements from Campus Progress.
- E-mail editor@campusprogress.org to write for our web magazine.

