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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
RAILROADS, PIPELINES, AND
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH



SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND TAX
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS
AND HEALTHCARE

CONGRESSMAN VERN BUCHANAN
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTEENTH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

January 7, 2010

The Honorable Barak Obama
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. President:

As the author of legislation calling for open and public meetings on the health care bill, I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that the American people are not shut out of this important debate.

I was very troubled at reports this week that congressional leaders intend to bypass the normal conference committee process and fast-track this legislation behind closed doors.

Open and honest government is the backbone of democracy. That's why I sponsored the "Sunshine Resolution" demanding that all negotiations on the health care bill be conducted under the watchful eye of the American people.

Excluding the public and press from this process sends a disturbing message. A government that is secretive and inaccessible cannot maintain the trust and confidence of the people it serves.

As you know, C-SPAN has offered to televise the negotiations. During the presidential campaign, you understood the importance of an open process and supported C-SPAN coverage.

I urge you to demand the same now as we consider a bill that will affect this country for years to come.

My home state of Florida has one of the toughest sunshine laws in the nation, requiring transparency and accountability. It has served Florida well.

The American people deserve the same -- an open, honest and accountable government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vern Buchanan".

Congressman Vern Buchanan

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