



March 21, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

I write to share the strong support of the National Retail Federation (NRF) for the Small Business Health Fairness Act (H.R. 1101). **Please note that NRF may consider votes on the Small Business Health Fairness Act and related procedural motions as Opportunity Index Votes for our annual voting scorecard.**

Group health benefits are the key to coverage for more than 177 million Americans. But, not all groups are created equally. NRF has long noted the discrepancy between smaller and larger companies and has supported many past iterations of the Johnson-Walberg bill to help provide smaller companies better and more affordable access to health benefits.

Group health coverage balances the risk of health care utilization between younger and older employees, healthy or less so. Employees come to work and obtain health coverage regardless of risk. Public pools, such as the SHOP plans, differ because participants coming to public pools are all seeking coverage. The private coverage, which balances risk better, is more affordable. However, smaller employers have fewer employees with which to balance their employees' risk profiles.

Association Health Plans offer small employers the opportunity to band together with other small employers in their local state through bona fide trade or professional associations. It also offers the potential to band together with other employer groups in other states utilizing the federal ERISA law to maintain common benefits across state lines.

We believe that AHPs are an important building block toward improving access to affordable health coverage for our nation's small businesses. That is why we support the Small Business Health Fairness Act and urge your support as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David French'.

David French
Senior Vice President
Government Relations

cc: Members, U.S. House of Representatives



NATIONAL **RETAIL** FEDERATION
1101 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20005
www.nrf.com