



**PRESS RELEASE
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National Puerto Rican Coalition Urges Passage of Senate Health Bill,

WASHINGTON (December 22) – After taking part in a Capitol news conference with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Tom Harkin (D-IA) in support of the Senate health bill, the Chairperson Elect and President of the National Puerto Rican Coalition today issued the following statements:

President and CEO Rafael A. Fantauzzi:

“We are on the threshold of legislation that’s nearly a century in the making, finally recognizing health care as a right and not a privilege, reducing costs and ensuring that all Americans can get and keep their coverage -- even if they don’t have perfect health. This is a tremendous step forward for Hispanic Americans in particular, since 1 in 3 Hispanics are uninsured. While there are many critical issues of importance to the Puerto Rican community yet to be resolved, Senate passage is needed to move the process forward, so we can remedy these issues in Conference. I am honored to stand with Leader Reid and Chairman Baucus, Chairman Dodd and Chairman Harkin, each of whom have worked so hard to get us this far.”

Chairperson Elect Miguel Lausell:

“An Hispanic American is more likely to be uninsured than any other individual, so we Latinos have the most at stake in legislation that will provide quality health care to millions of Americans who today can’t get it. No legislation is perfect, however, and we urge adoption of the House provisions on Puerto Rico, achieved through the hard work of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus led by Chairperson Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY). We thank and commend these Senators, through whose persistence and skill we are about to take an enormous stride toward a more affordable, efficient, fair and humane health care system for all Americans.”

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About NPRC

NPRC's mission is to systematically strengthen and enhance the social, political, and economic well-being of Puerto Ricans throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico with a special focus on the most vulnerable.