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Chairman's message: Examining healthcare reform proposals

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National healthcare reform has been a headline-grabbing news story for the past couple of months now, as Congress inches closer to what we hope will be an equitable plan for all involved. While many Americans recognize and appreciate the freedom and choice our current healthcare system provides, there are still many people from senior citizens to single parents to small business owners who struggle to afford health insurance coverage for themselves and their families.

Fortunately, the U.S. Senate recognized that passing healthcare overhaul legislation during August would be too much, too soon. What our country needs is a balanced approach to modernizing the healthcare system that is fair to employers and employees, as well as to patients and their doctors. Part of what makes being a member of Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc. (ABC) special is that we believe the principles of competition, free enterprise, and consumer choice should serve as a blueprint from which we can judge all legislation-not just those that directly affect the construction industry.

In 2006, Massachusetts passed its own health care reform that includes a state mandate that all Massachusetts residents must have health insurance. In addition, employers with 10 or more employees are also assessed a financial penalty if they opt not to provide insurance. While the results have been more costly than expected, the Commonwealth deserves credit for being the first state in the country to make genuine efforts at healthcare reform.

At the national level, there is much more at stake. The decisions made over the next few months will determine whether we get balanced reform or a bureaucratic takeover of the healthcare industry. This is why it is important for all us to educate ourselves as citizens, employees, and business owners on just what Congress is doing about healthcare. ABC has established an up-to-date website that includes facts and information about the proposals under discussion. You can visit the website [here](#). Let's all do our best to ensure that an issue that is critical to American families and the nation's economy is the subject of a thorough, common sense discussion by our elected lawmakers.

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