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Rep. Ron Kind, Vice-Chair
Rep. Allyson Schwartz, Vice-Chair
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New Dems Announce Health Reform Priorities, Public Option Framework

Washington D.C – Today, the leadership of the New Democrat Coalition, representing 69 members of the U. S. House of Representatives, continued a dialogue on health reform with House Leadership and the Committees of jurisdiction, by announcing a framework for any public option being considered.

Last month, the New Dems announced their health reform principles and met with House Leadership and the Chairmen of the Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor Committees. During the meeting, leaders of the New Dems discussed the need to contain costs, improve patient care, reform the private insurance marketplace, harness innovation and outlined an initial structure for any public option. In response to House Leadership requests for the New Dems to play a role in the upcoming debate, the New Dems today reiterated that many of their Members remain concerned about any public option and submitted to the House Leadership and the Committees of jurisdiction a list of criteria that must be applied to any legislation brought before the House that includes a public option.

“New Democrats are committed to partnering with our colleagues in Congress, President Obama and leaders of the private sector to achieve critical health care reform this year,” said Congressman Joseph Crowley (NY-07), New Dem Whip. “The skyrocketing cost of health care is burdening American individuals, families and businesses and we need to transform our current health care system to ensure prosperity for our nation in the generations to come. The New Dems thank the House leadership for working constructively with all members of the Democratic caucus to achieve reform, and we plan on continuing to be an integral part of these discussions as we move forward.”

“New Dems are committed to helping pass a uniquely American solution in which all Americans have access to affordable, meaningful health coverage. We know that if we embrace innovation, prevention, the importance of primary care, and continued belief in a public-private partnership we can achieve this vital goal. Private and public plans, competing on a level playing field, will create the strongest possible marketplace for the uninsured, individuals, and small businesses to purchase insurance and in doing so we further expand competition and choice for

American consumers,” said Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz (PA-13), New Dem Vice Chair and Co-Chair of the New Dems Health Care Task Force.

“Health care reform is major concern that needs immediate action, particularly when it comes to controlling costs,” said Congressman Ron Kind (WI-03), New Dem Vice-Chair. “This framework will level the playing field between the private market and any public option that may be included in health care reform legislation and more importantly, hold the public and private options accountable to provide quality health care at a reasonable cost for all Americans.”

“Central to any effort to reform our health care system must be the implementation of effective measures to control costs,” said Congressman Adam Smith (WA-09), New Dem Vice-Chair. “For far too long the cost of health care has weighed down our economy and put quality care out of reach for too many Americans. We must enact common sense reforms that address the excessive cost of care, and facilitate access to all Americans.”

The New Democrat Coalition is comprised of members committed to enacting policies that empower the U.S. to grow economically, maintain its competitiveness in the global marketplace, continue to be the world’s leaders in innovation and technological advancement, and strengthen our economic and national security. The Coalition is dedicated to providing the leadership necessary to implement policies that will ensure that America maintains its prosperity and global leadership.

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