WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

September 25, 2012

Governor Scott Walker
State Capitol, 115 East
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

We write to renew a request you received on July 21 from several members of the Assembly and Senate Health Committees encouraging you to re-evaluate your decision to not implement the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) until after the November 6 presidential election. Today, we specifically ask you to create a special committee to restart the work of building a competitive state-based health insurance exchange, including public meetings, bi-partisan participation and stakeholder involvement.

We urge you to act quickly, as Wisconsin must make a decision and submit a detailed plan to the federal government by November 16, if it wants to create a state-based exchange rather than rely on a federal alternative designed in Washington.

Originally conceived by conservatives, health insurance exchanges are the cornerstone of the national health care law, providing competitive private marketplaces that will drive down health care costs, empower consumers and provide more options to Wisconsin families and small businesses.

PPACA offers states three exchange options: state-based, federally facilitated or a hybrid state-federal partnership. As you know, the previous administration began work on a state-based exchange only weeks after PPACA was signed by President Obama in March 2010, making Wisconsin a national leader at the time in implementing national health care reform. The Legislature's Special Committee on Health Care Reform Implementation, chaired by Representative Richards and Senator Erpenbach, likewise made significant progress during 2010 in writing a bi-partisan bill to establish an exchange, until the committee was disbanded in 2011 after a change in party leadership.

There is general consensus among many Democratic and Republican governors that states should create their own exchanges and not relinquish that authority to the federal government. Even vocal opponents of PPACA, like Republican Governors Terry Branstad of Iowa and Rick Snyder of Michigan, have both said they would prefer a state-based exchange to a federal one. That's because they understand consumers and small business owners in their states would be best

served by a model built at home specific to them, rather than a one-size-fits-all model dictated from Washington.

If Wisconsin wants to operate a state-based exchange, it must submit detailed plans and documentation (officially known as the exchange blueprint) to the federal government by November 16, 2012, demonstrating that we will have an operational exchange in 2013 and a self-sufficient exchange on January 1, 2014. However, by choosing to shut down work, at least publicly, on a state-based exchange until after the November 6 election, your administration has all but guaranteed that Wisconsin will be forced to accept either a default federal alternative or some type of hybrid model that the federal government jointly controls with the state. Providing a mere 10 days to prepare the exchange blueprint and allow for public input is simply not enough time to get the job done right.

The citizens we've been elected to represent expect us to work together to solve the serious problems they face every day. With over 500,000 Wisconsinites in need of health insurance, we should be cooperating across party lines and between branches of government to maximize the opportunity of every Wisconsinite to obtain affordable, quality health care. Building the required health insurance exchange in Wisconsin is one proven, effective way to do that. We strongly encourage you to drop your opposition to implementing PPACA and to join us right now in restarting the work of building a state-based exchange for Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

JON RICHARDS
State Representative
Assembly District 19

JON ERPENBACH
State Senator
Senate District 27