Written by Jim Duffett
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'A Strong State Based Health Insurance Marketplace Levels the Playing Field for Small Businesses' (Springfield) - State Senator Dave Koehler and other Senators, along with members of the Campaign for Better Health Care's Small Business Health Care Consortium including Springfield small business owner Mark Burris, President Larry Ivory of the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce, and Linda Forman for the National Association of Women Business Owners Chicago convened today in Springfield to address the need for a state based health insurance marketplace in Illinois that offers strong protections for small businesses and consumers and accountability of the insurance industry, and expressed their support for Senate Bill 34 (SB34.) Mark Burris of Springfield, the owner of MCCE Investments and owner of seven Subway Sandwich franchises, said "Small businesses need a level playing field and there must be checks and balances with the insurance companies."

Burris continued, " Financing of the health insurance exchange under SB34, Amendment 1 is through assessments of the insurers, as it should be. The insurance industry will benefit from the tax dollars used to create the infrastructure of the how the exchange is set up. It is only appropriate that they finance the day to day operations of the insurance health marketplace when an estimated one million new insurance customers will be purchasing private health insurance."

SB34 establishes a robust, pro-consumer and pro-small business health insurance marketplace in Illinois. The health insurance marketplace will be the one-stop insurance shop for more than a million Illinoisans. SB34 ensures that the marketplace is governed by a diverse board that represents women, small businesses, communities of color, labor, public health, people with disabilities, and consumers, and provides for accountability of the insurance industry selling plans on the new marketplace.

Speaking on behalf of the National Association of Women Business Owners Chicago (NAWBO Chicago), Linda Forman said, "The Small Business Health Care Consortium and NAWBO agree that who sits on the insurance exchange governing board is very important. We believe that a statewide governing board will be better able to understand the needs of women and the diversity of backgrounds and geography of small businesses throughout this state if the governing board is composed of the types of people who will be using the health insurance exchange marketplace." On November 16, 2012, the State of Illinois filed a "blueprint" with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It stated that beginning January 1, 2014, Illinois would embark on a State-Federal Partnership Marketplace (exchange), and then a State Marketplace beginning on January 1, 2015. For Illinois to embark on a State Marketplace the Illinois General Assembly must enact legislation establishing a state Governing Board, and the financing of the operations of a State Marketplace. SB34 would fulfill this requirement and would establish an effective, fair, balanced and accountable marketplace. "Having insurance companies go through a certification process that is open to the public and small businesses, in which they can be held more accountable for their accessibility to services, quality and most of all the prices that they charge, is long overdue," said Larry Ivory, President of the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce, an SBHCC member. "Small businesses owners want a health insurance

exchange marketplace that will be able to contain costs and be easier to understand."

ADDENDA

View statements (PDF) from:

National Association of Women Business Owners Chicago

Springfield small business owner Mark Burris

Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce

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About the Small Business Health Care Consortium

As a project of the Campaign for Better Health Care, we are a tax-exempt, non-partisan coalition of small businesses that serves to educate about the impact of health reform, encourage small business friendly legislation and regulation and enable the collective voice of small businesses to have a direct impact on controlling health care costs in Illinois.
www.cbhconline.org/smallbusiness

About Campaign for Better Health Care We believe that accessible, affordable, quality health care is a basic human right for all people. The Campaign for Better Health Care is the state's largest coalition representing over 300 diverse organizations, organizing to help create and advocate for an accessible, quality health care system for all. For more information, visit
www.cbhconline.org
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