

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

It is urgent that you read this message and that you, your local officers, and your members act NOW or Congress and the White House may adopt legislation that will tax our health care benefits.

Across CWA we have supported and worked for health care reform for 20 years.

We have always aimed high, focused on universal, affordable and fairly funded supplements to employer-based care. We have always been clear that we have sacrificed for our negotiated plans and reform should assist us in maintaining and improving coverage for our families and retirees.

Unfortunately, I must report that the excise tax on good health care plans that was included in the Senate, but not the House, version continues to move toward adoption unless CWA and our allies act NOW!

The Speaker of the House and at least 189 members have made it clear that they oppose the tax and the House version is funded progressively by taxing those in the top 1 percent as well as including an employer mandate for employers that do not provide even minimal health care coverage. But the Senate leadership is saying some version of the excise tax, which could affect nearly all of our plans, must be included in order to get the 60 votes needed to move the conference bill forward.

The CWA Executive Board is asking every steward to mobilize her or his workplace Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of this week to call House members with a simple and clear message:

"No Taxes on our health care plans. If our plans are hit with a 40 percent excise tax, we will never keep the health care we have and when we voted for you that was your promise. We support the House version of reform, but compromise with the Senate and White House cannot include taxing our plans."

The call-in number is 888.580.0792. Follow the prompts and you will be directed to your House member's office.

This fight is NOW. The status seems to change by the hour and negotiations could be over as early as this weekend. CWAers like you have led this fight and we need to use every minute to make sure that we make a difference NOW in the final days of the House, Senate and White House negotiations.

In Solidarity,  
Larry Cohen  
CWA President