

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2802

March 23, 2010

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
Attorney General, State of Nevada
100 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701-4717

Dear Attorney General Masto,

Given our mutual commitment to upholding the laws of our state and nation, I wanted to draw your attention to provisions of the recently-passed Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590, PL# 111-148) which I believe merit your consideration.

Numerous governors and attorneys general across the nation have expressed their concerns about the individual mandate this law imposes on Americans. On the day President Obama signed H.R. 3590, attorneys general of fourteen states publicly supported legal action to block its implementation. Four state legislatures have already passed legislation challenging the federal government's authority to pass this sweeping law, which for the first time requires citizens to purchase a product in order to be in good standing with their government.

I am also very troubled by the state-specific Medicare and Medicaid deals included in this law. While some of these deals may be altered by the reconciliation bill currently going through the U.S. Senate, not all are addressed. While states like Nevada will have to make cuts in other programs to meet new federal Medicaid requirements, select states will not have to make such sacrifices as Nevada taxpayers offset the difference. As Governor Gibbons recently noted in his letter to Nevada's congressional delegation, the new law burdens Nevada with a tremendous unfunded mandate.

Nevadans' persistent concerns regarding this law merit your immediate attention, and I encourage your timely review of its provisions. Making quality, affordable healthcare coverage available to every Nevadan is a goal we both support. However, all federal laws must respect the protections granted to the states and their citizens by the Constitution. A law is not simply justified by its intentions – Congress must honor states' rights and the equality of each citizen. We must not tolerate the passage of federal laws that unconstitutionally burden Nevadans with other Americans' healthcare costs.

I trust I can count on your help in this process as we continue serving Nevada. I look forward to hearing from you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



DEAN HELLER
Member of Congress