

June 22, 2009

The Honorable John Rockefeller  
United States Senate  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Via Fax: 202-224-6472

**RE: S 623 - Support**

Dear Senator Rockefeller:

We are writing on behalf of the Disability Rights Legal Center to thank you for sponsoring the Pre-existing Patient Protection Act of 2009 (S. 623), which will prohibit health insurance companies from imposing preexisting condition exclusions in group health plans and in health insurance coverage in the group and individual markets.

Through our Cancer Legal Resource Center (CLRC), we have unique knowledge and experience with laws and legislation that impact the rights of individuals diagnosed with cancer, cancer survivors, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and employers across the country.

By way of introduction, the Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC) has worked to implement the civil rights of people with disabilities for over 30 years. We are the oldest cross-disability legal advocacy organization in the country. Our mission is to promote the rights of people with disabilities and the public interest in, and awareness of, those rights by providing legal and related services.

The CLRC, a national, joint program of the DLRC and Loyola Law School, has provided over 120,000 people with free and confidential information and resources on cancer-related legal issues, including access to care, insurance, government benefits, estate planning, and employment. Please visit [www.CancerLegalResourceCenter.org](http://www.CancerLegalResourceCenter.org) for more information.

Last year, we received over 5,000 calls from people coping with a cancer diagnosis with questions about cancer-related legal issues. Over 23% of those calls were about getting or keeping health insurance after a cancer diagnosis, or navigated managed care. Access to insurance for people with cancer is often directly linked to their survival rate. Denying people access to health insurance because of a pre-existing condition or requiring them to wait a period of time before getting access to life-saving screening or treatment is unacceptable.

The DRLC strongly supports S 623, and we look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of this bill. In addition, as Congress moves forward with discussions on how to reform

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our nation's healthcare system, we urge you to champion the inclusion of the principles in S 623 in any health care reform proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, or if there is anything that we can do to ensure that people with pre-existing medical conditions gain access to health insurance options.

Sincerely,



Paula D. Pearlman, Esq.  
Executive Director,  
Disability Rights Legal Center



Joanna L. Morales, Esq.  
Director,  
Cancer Legal Resource Center