# Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 27, 2007

Leslie Norwalk
Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Administrator Norwalk:

We write to express our extreme disappointment about CMS' decision to partially approve the state of Vermont's Medicaid waiver amendment (11-W=00194/1).

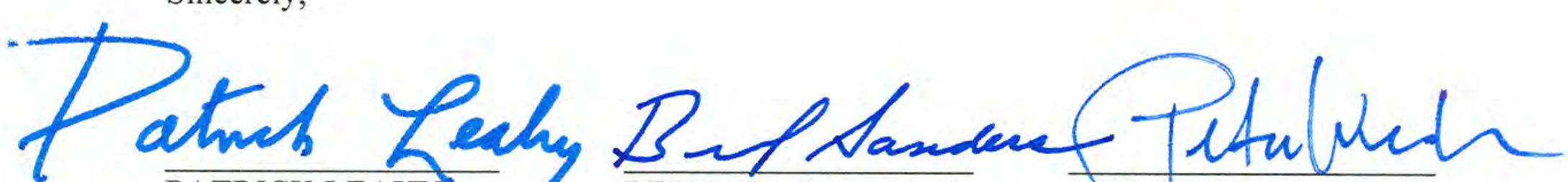
In his State of the Union Address the President outlined his vision for health care reform through the tax code. He also proposed a companion initiative, Affordable Choices, which would encourage partnership between the Federal Government and states to utilize existing dollars to find innovative ways to extend health coverage to the uninsured. We agree that in the absence of national reform that would provide universal access to health care, the Federal Government should be a supportive player in helping initiate health care reform on the state level.

Through the Catamount Health Care program, Vermont has made a commitment to reducing the number of uninsured in our state. A significant portion of the state's plan involves utilizing existing Medicaid dollars to provide premium assistance to Vermonters to purchase insurance through their employers, a policy that is explicitly supported in the President's Affordable Choices Initiative.

By not fully approving the State of Vermont's Medicaid waiver amendment, CMS sends a message to states that rather than be a partner in health care reform, the President chooses to stand in the way of meaningful reform that will provide relief to Americans who lack health insurance. This action will have serious financial implications for Vermont and could jeopardize the state's ability to reduce health care costs over the long term.

We request that the Administration reexamine its decision regarding Vermont's waiver amendment and fully approves the State's request. We look forward to this action and the courtesy of a timely response to our letter.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator

PETER WELCH
United States Congressman