

JAMES H. DOUGLAS  
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 18, 2006

Mr. Martin Fino  
73 Center Street, #4  
Rutland, VT 05701

Dear Mr. Fino:

I have received your correspondence voicing your opposition to bill S.1955, the Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act of 2005. My Administration, through John Crowley, the Commissioner of our Department of Banking, Insurance, Securities and Health Care Administration has expressed our concerns to our congressional delegation in writing.

We do share the stated purpose of S.1955 - "to reduce costs and improve access in the health insurance marketplace," however, S.1955 as reported from the Committee still contains some features that concern me, and may be counterproductive to Vermont's efforts to achieve its health care reform goals. For example, I am a strong supporter of mental health parity, but S.1955 would appear to preempt Vermont's mental health parity laws. The bill would also appear to preempt long-standing rating practices in place in the small group market in Vermont, which have made it possible for small groups to have access to health insurance at predictable rates. In addition, there may be reduced access and increased premiums for Vermont small businesses that are unable to join one of the national associations authorized by this legislation.

For these reasons, we have urged modification of this bill so that it is more in keeping with Vermont's health care reform efforts.

Thank you for taking time to write to me about these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JH Douglas", written over a circular stamp.

James H. Douglas  
Governor

JHD/dbb