

AFBF Urges House to Oppose Health Care Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C, November 3, 2009 —American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman today urged all members of the House “to stand with our nation’s farmers and ranchers and oppose H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act.”

In a letter to the House, Stallman said health insurance costs are an ongoing and significant expense for agricultural employers, and health care reform must not unduly burden farm and ranch businesses with costs they can’t afford.

“While tax incentives in the bill are designed to help small employers cover health care expenses, there are no allowances for seasonal workers common to our industry,” Stallman wrote.

“ We are opposed to an employer mandate and view an 8 percent payroll tax imposed for non-coverage as excessive and as burdensome as mandated coverage.

“Farm Bureau believes that health care is primarily the responsibility of individuals, and we are opposed to provisions in the bill that mandate individual coverage. Most farmers and ranchers are self-employed and would already cover themselves if they could afford it. Passing a mandate accompanied by the threat of a tax for noncompliance only makes the situation worse for people unable to afford coverage in the first place,” Stallman wrote.

Farm Bureau supports private, market-based reforms and is opposed to the creation of a government-operated health insurance program.

“We believe that the creation of an exchange where individuals and businesses can easily compare and purchase privately offered insurance will encourage the competition necessary to bring about cost savings,” Stallman wrote.