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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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March 25, 2010

The Honorable Edolphus Towns
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I respectfully request that the full Committee convene a hearing as soon as possible to evaluate the threats made to Members of Congress as a result of their vote on last weekend's healthcare bill. I believe we must engage in a fact-based evaluation of these reports and examine them in the context of other threats whether foreign or domestic.

I am deeply disturbed over the recent reports that Members of Congress are experiencing threats in response to their vote on the healthcare bill. In the United States of America, we take tremendous national pride in our long-standing tradition of resolving disagreements at the ballot box, not through violence.

Undoubtedly, the process by which healthcare legislation was passed this past weekend did not lead to a majority of support of the American people. Those, however, who are frustrated, exasperated, and feel betrayed by the Members of Congress that voted for this legislation must register those feelings at the ballot box and not on the streets. Mr. Chairman, I am particularly sensitive to the threats that are being made. You may recall that a few years ago an extremist group, the Jewish Defense League (JDL), attempted to bomb my office in California.

Congress took strong action to address voter intimidation during the march toward civil rights for all Americans and we must, likewise, not tolerate extremists who seek to intimidate Members of Congress through violence over any issue.

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Emotions are running high in our country. The sooner we have a public discussion based on the facts, the sooner we will be able to return to doing our job in the proper environment – that is an environment where thoughtful debate and careful consideration rule the day.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives and has broad oversight jurisdiction as set forth in House Rule X.

If your staff has any questions about this request, please contact John Ohly or Steve Castor of the Minority staff, at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Ranking Member