

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

May 20, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman
The Honorable Charles Grassley, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

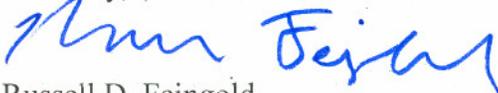
Dear Chairman Baucus and Ranking Member Grassley:

Thank you for including policy options to expand access to home and community-based supports and services in your brief, "*Expanding Health Care Coverage: Proposals to Provide Affordable Coverage to All Americans*." As you know, my home state of Wisconsin has enjoyed considerable success by giving our long term care consumers the option of staying in their homes and communities as an alternative to nursing home care. As a result of this policy, Wisconsinites are choosing to remain at home in record numbers, receive the care and supports they need to remain independent, and save the state over \$1.2 million each month in avoided costs.

What we already know in Wisconsin will soon become known around the country because of the policy options you suggest for health reform legislation. Taking steps to increase the federal matching rate by 1 percent for home and community based services will help states implement new programs and expand existing supports and services for those in need. Streamlining and simplifying the complex waiver process will also help states provide an option for home and community based care to their residents. And increasing flexibility in how states may use home and community based waivers will allow for greater innovation in state-by-state programs.

I appreciate your continued efforts to include long term care reforms in health reform legislation. I share that commitment because I have seen the benefits of home and community based services firsthand. I encourage you to use Wisconsin as an example of why home and community based services work in the upcoming debate, and offer my assistance to promote these policies in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold
United States Senate

Cc: Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)
Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman Ted Kennedy (D-MA)
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Ranking Member Mike Enzi (R-WY)