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Leadership starts with credibility. That is why it was particularly disappointing to watch President Obama's speech to Congress last week. His speech was eloquent, but lacked the straight talk needed to lead America toward real health care reform.

Let's start with two facts that are hard for anyone to dispute.

First, while we have the best quality health care in the world, skyrocketing costs have jeopardized America's health care system and it is badly in need of repair. Over the last ten years, annual health insurance premiums have jumped 119 percent. And, every family knows it. Simply put, we have to find ways to help families get and keep affordable health care coverage.



Second, in town hall meetings across America, citizens have expressed genuine concern about a potential government takeover of healthcare. Folks are worried about their personal healthcare freedoms. Many Americans are rightfully concerned about the impact of increased deficit spending, and they know there are two results you can count on from a completely government-run system: lower quality care and rationing of care. That's what has happened in every country that has tried such a system.

The President had an opportunity to acknowledge these facts, shoot straight with the American people, and lead.

Instead, he took the political route. The clearest example was the President's claim that his plan won't add "one dime to the deficit now or in the future." Almost no one in America actually believes the President can add millions of new people to the federal healthcare system without spending more money. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office says the current healthcare bills will increase the budget deficit by at least \$239 billion over the next 10 years, and by trillions of dollars in the decades to come. Yet, the President insisted on making this claim.

Despite the current poisoned environment, there remain real opportunities for consensus reform. These reforms include: requiring health insurance companies to cover pre-existing conditions, incenting preventative care, making health insurance policies portable from job to job and state to state, and providing small businesses with tax credits to help provide health coverage for their employees.

But, it will require straight talk, not partisan politics to get us there. Several hundred years ago, our nation's first President became famous for always telling the truth. If there is any chance to achieve bipartisan healthcare reform that best serves the American people, we must begin with an honest discussion.

If you agree, we hope you'll join our team.

Sincerely,
Luke Messer

P.S. Please click on www.lukemesser.com to view our latest video, volunteer, or make a secure online contribution to support our campaign!