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North Carolina Small Business Owners Eager for Healthcare Reform

Research Shows Small Business Owners Believe Healthcare Reform is Necessary and Important to Getting the Economy Back on Track

Sausalito, CA, Sept. 11, 2009 – Recent research shows the majority of North Carolina small businesses are struggling due to the high costs of healthcare, and believe healthcare reform is necessary and important in getting the economy back on track.

A statewide survey of 200 randomly selected small businesses found that affordability is the primary obstacle in obtaining health insurance. North Carolina was one of 15 states polled over the past five months by Small Business Majority, a leading national small business advocacy organization focused on healthcare reform.

Eighty-five percent of North Carolina small business owners not offering health insurance say they can't afford to. Of those who do provide insurance, 88 percent are struggling to do so. Small business owners also see the cost of health insurance as a significant barrier to entrepreneurship.

"Small business people are in an untenable position when it comes to healthcare. Costs are astronomical and rising every year, yet being uninsured can be just as burdensome financially if illness strikes," said John Arensmeyer, founder and chief executive officer of Small Business Majority. "Small businesses are desperate for reform. The cost of doing nothing is just too high."

The survey found that 88 percent of the state's small business owners believe that people should be able to buy health insurance without regard to any past health problems. In addition, 80 percent support the creation of a health insurance exchange from which small businesses could choose coverage from competing health plans.

"The cost for healthcare is exorbitant. I have only six employees, so getting a group policy isn't something we can afford. We have no choice but to be uninsured," said Blake Anderson, owner of Innovation Renovation—a specialty construction business in Raleigh. "If it could be made affordable and all my employees could be insured, that would be a huge weight off my shoulders. We all need it."

Additional findings in the report include:

- 51% of small businesses believe their company has a responsibility to provide health coverage for its employees.
- 65% of small business owners believe that to make healthcare more affordable, it's important to share the responsibility among individuals, employers, insurance companies, providers, and government.
- 65% support the choice of a private or public health insurance plan

About Small Business Majority

Small Business Majority conducts extensive scientific polling and research to determine small business owners' perspectives on healthcare reform and brings a nonpartisan voice to policy discussions nationwide. Based in Sausalito, CA, with offices in Washington, DC and New York City, the organization works with small business owners, healthcare policy experts and elected officials nationwide.

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