



## **\*\*Health Care Reform Status Update\*\***

### *Democrats Discuss Reform with Constituents During August District Work Period*

*“[Health care reform] should be about proving that Congress and the American people are capable of reaching a reasonable consensus on a problem that must be solved. You don't get there by shouting, shoving and waving fingers in the faces of lawmakers. It would be terrific if the town hall meetings could resume without the disruption. Citizens could actually get their questions answered and lawmakers could hear their concerns. Civil discourse is the only way to produce a bill that everyone can live with.” – Detroit News, [8/24/09](#)*

Over the past month, Democrats made a concerted effort to engage their constituents on the critical issue of health care reform, holding more than 1000 health care events. Despite significant coverage of opposition to reform at some of these events, an incredible amount of substantive discussion occurred at town hall meetings around the country, and support for reform remains strong.

### **Despite Extraordinary News Coverage of Protests, Democratic Led Health Care Town Halls Engage, Inform Constituents**

**“There is an overwhelming case that the electronic media went out of their way to cover the noise and ignored the calmer (and from television's point of view "boring") encounters between elected representatives and their constituents. It's also clear that the anger that got so much attention largely reflects a fringe right-wing view opposed to all sorts of government programs most Americans support.” – E.J. Dionne, Washington Post, [9/03/09](#)**

**“You wouldn't know it from watching cable television, but many traditional antagonists in the health debate now support the basic thrust of the Democratic reform bills.” – Ronald Brownstein, National Journal, [9/05/09](#)**

### **Public Opinion for Health Care Reform Remains Strong**

Despite the focus on town hall disruptions, the public's support for health care reform remains strong:

**82% of Americans say that the U.S. health care system needs either “fundamental changes” (55%) or needs “to be rebuilt” (27%). – CBS News, [9/01/09](#)**

**Ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans think our country's health care system needs a great deal (45%) or some reform (46%), opposed to 7% who favor no reform at all. – CNN, [8/31/09](#)**

**Fifty-six percent (56%) say that “it is more important than ever that we address health care reform” compared to only 32% who say that “the nation cannot afford to take on health care right now.” – Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates, [8/25/09](#)**

**Nearly half (49%) of Americans who have heard about the protestors who have attended recent health care town halls say “the protestors do not reflect the views of most Americans, but 41% say they do.” – CBS News, [9/01/09](#)**

*Prepared by the Office of Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, 09/08/09*