



VINCENT C. GRAY  
MAYOR

**BY HAND**

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 504  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson,

I write to express my support for **Bill 20-240, "The Better Prices, Better Quality, Better Choices for Health Coverage Amendment Act of 2013"** that will be before the Council for vote at the May 22<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Meeting. This legislation, which was introduced by you on my behalf, builds on the D.C. Health Benefit Exchange Authority Establishment Act of 2011, which was passed unanimously by the Council and positioned the District as one of the first jurisdictions in the nation to commit to building a state based exchange marketplace for our residents.

*"The Better Prices, Better Quality, Better Choices for Health Coverage Amendment Act of 2013* is vitally important to ensuring that we create a fair, competitive, and transparent health insurance marketplace in the District that encourages health insurance companies to offer the best prices for all businesses and families. Making and keeping coverage affordable is critically important. The best way for the District to ensure that our residents get the best prices is to require all insurers to sell through this new online marketplace – to make their prices and health plans publicly available for everyone. This transparency will enable people to see the prices, benefits, and provider networks so that they can compare their options and select the plan that best meets their needs and budgets.

The D.C. Health Benefit Exchange Authority has been hard at work for nearly a year planning for the open enrollment season that begins October 1, for coverage effective January 1, 2014. They have involved hundreds of residents in an open, public process to make decisions to shape the market and enforce vital patient protections. Those efforts are already paying dividends with four major insurance carriers pledging to participate in the DC Exchange this year. This means residents and employers will have more choices than

they have today with true competition for their business. This includes the thousands of residents who are uninsured or underinsured and thousands of small businesses that struggle to afford health care coverage for their workforce.

The District has always been a leader in health care coverage. We have the second-lowest rate of uninsured and one of the strongest Medicaid programs in the country. *The Better Prices, Better Quality, Better Choices for Health Coverage Act of 2013* continues to place us at the forefront. This legislation is the right prescription to provide affordable coverage options for our small businesses and their employees. They deserve nothing less and I ask for your support.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vincent C. Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "V" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Vincent C. Gray

cc: Members of the Council of the District of Columbia