

Thank You Martin

July 19, 1993

Congress
of the
United States
House of Representatives
H. MARTIN LANCASTER
NORTH CAROLINA
THIRD DISTRICT

Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

I continue to be disturbed by Ira Magaziner's focus on tobacco as the only source of taxation to support health care. I understand he has once again publicly stated to a Democratic Leadership Council meeting that only tobacco will be taxed.

Please let me make clear at the very outset that I will NOT vote for a health care program that singles out one commodity as the only source of revenue. Though I will not like to do so, I can support a good plan that has revenues coming from several sources that are perceived by my constituents as fair and balanced. A plan which focuses only on tobacco is political dynamite in my district and state. More tobacco is grown in my district than any other in the country.

I have made universal health care my top priority for more than four years, long before it became a Clinton national priority. When other Members of Congress held one "town meeting" on health care last summer, I held seven. Four years ago, I held the first Rural Health Care Conference in any congressional district and began focusing the attention of my constituents on the need for health care reform at that time. It will break my heart to do so, but please know that I will do everything in my power to defeat a health care reform package which singles out tobacco for a confiscatory tax and does not fairly spread the burden, at least to alcohol of all types.

Let me assure you and Dr. Magaziner that at least in the perception of my constituents, alcohol creates as many health problems as tobacco. Not only do people have health care problems as a result of personal consumption, but alcohol also leads to injuries of third parties. Tobacco does not cause the injuries from spouse abuse, child abuse, automobile accidents, etc. that alcohol does.

Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton
Page Two

The North Carolina Democratic delegation voted unanimously for the President's budget and for reconciliation on the promise of the White House that tobacco would not be unfairly singled out to pay the cost of health care reform. If Dr. Magaziner continues to insist on tobacco as the only source of revenue, the White House should not expect to ever again get that kind of support from our delegation.

I believe that the tone of this letter will indicate just how seriously I consider this matter, but just in case it is not coming through, there is not a more important issue for my constituents and for my future political success than this one. Please take that into account as you finalize this plan.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,


H. Martin Lancaster
Member of Congress

HML:tcy

cc: The Honorable Richard Riley
Mr. Mack McLarty
Dr. Ira Magaziner

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No single region or state should be targeted for the costs of national health care reform.

Thank you also to all the Members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation who continue their efforts to ensure that tobacco is not singled out to pay for the nation's health care.

Wayne County Farm Bureau
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