

The Ethiopian American Community Weighs In On Health Care Reform

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Contact: Ahmed Bhadelia

202-225-2631

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Over the past several months, the debate on health care reform has produced extensive dialogue amongst many communities in our nation. From dining room tables to talk radio, our country has engaged in a uniquely American process fueled by the diversity of opinions we enjoy.

This is why today, as Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Ethiopia and Ethiopian Americans; I am honored to present statements on health care reform submitted by the Ethiopian American community. These statements have been offered by the community to ensure that their voices are heard during these historic times. I formed the Caucus in 2003 with the goal of providing a legislative voice to the Ethiopian American community, and to strengthen a long-established relationship between Ethiopia and the United States. As the largest immigrant group from the African continent, Ethiopian Americans extend themselves to every aspect of American society, thereby making a real impact on American culture.

Health care is a critical issue to the Ethiopian American community. Presently fewer and fewer Ethiopians have health insurance, and therefore cannot afford good medical care. Much like countless other Americans, many hard working Ethiopian Americans are employed in the hospitality services and small business industries. Many jobs in these sectors fail to provide any health insurance benefits to employees and their families. As a result, most of members of the community are not in a position to get preventive help and basic medical services. In addition, many original Ethiopian refugees from the 1970 refugee admission boom are starting to become eligible for Medicare. These issues allow the Ethiopian American community to provide unique insight into the current debate.

While we all may have different ideas about how best to achieve health care reform, there is a fundamental consensus that the need for health care reform is dire. The following statements show that opening up the conversation to all areas of our diverse nation provides for a healthy and robust debate.

[Statement by the Citizen's League of Ethiopian-Americans](#)

[Statement by the Ethiopian Heritage Foundation](#)

[Statement by the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.](#)

[Statement by the Life's Second Chance Foundation](#)

[Statement by Ethiopian Community Services Inc.](#)

[Statement by Ethiopian Community and Cultural Center](#)

[Statement by Ethiopian Americans United](#)

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The Congressional Caucus on Ethiopia and Ethiopian-Americans works to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia and is a legislative voice for Ethiopian-Americans across the United States. The Caucus serves the Ethiopian-American community as it continues to grow in population and influence, and supports the community's interests both here and in Ethiopia. For more information on please call (202) 225-2631 or visit [http:// honda.house.gov/ethiopia.shtml](http://honda.house.gov/ethiopia.shtml)