

March 17, 2009

The Honorable Ron Kind  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1406 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Wally Herger  
U.S. House of Representatives  
242 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kind and Herger:

Farm Bureau thanks you for introducing H.R. 1470, the Equity for Our Nation's Self-Employed Act. This valuable legislation would help the self-employed afford health insurance by allowing them to take a full tax deduction for the health insurance premiums they pay.

Self-employed individuals, including most farmers and ranchers, are finding it more difficult to obtain health insurance coverage with premiums on the rise and benefits on the decline. Congress recognized this problem and now allows self-employed individuals an income tax deduction for the cost of their health insurance premiums. This legislation will help make health insurance more affordable by also allowing a deduction against the 15.3 percent self-employment tax.

A 2007 survey of Midwestern farmers conducted by The Access Project showed that on average, a farm family spent \$5,000 on health insurance premiums plus another \$2,500 on out-of-pocket medical expenses. A deduction against the 15.3 percent self-employment tax would mean an additional \$750 that could be used to keep or improve health coverage or to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Farm Bureau commends Congress for making health care a priority and you for taking a leadership role in this issue. We stand ready to help pass H.R. 1420 so that self-employed farmers and ranchers will have the same deduction for the cost of health insurance that big business already has. Passage of this legislation is the right thing to do and will have an immediate positive impact on the self-employed and their access to health care.

Sincerely,



Bob Stallman  
President