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NATIONAL NURSES
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

A Voice for Nurses. A Vision for Healthcare.
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September 19, 2008

Office of the Speaker, Nancy Pelosi
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

Nurses across America, as you know, care a lot about the state of our healthcare system. But we also rely on and worry about workers compensation insurance. Injuries on the job are at epidemic numbers for RNs working in overcrowded and understaffed hospitals (higher numbers than truck drivers or construction workers). We need to be confident that workers compensation insurance will be there when nurses are injured and we want to make sure there is a local regulator we can turn to when it fails. That is why we write in opposition to H.R. 5840 (Kanjorski).

Under the proposal, in order to carry out an international insurance agreement, the Treasury Department could preempt state regulations and laws that may conflict with the trade agreement and in any way set different standards for offshore insurance companies. But, as nurses who want to make sure that coverage is there in the case of injury, we believe that it may well be essential to have extra protections when workers compensation insurance is being sold by an overseas firm. And we believe accountable state regulators and policymakers should not be second-guessed by the Treasury Department in Washington when it comes to setting standards that are relevant for that state.

The clearest lesson from the financial debacle of the past several days is that the deregulatory agenda of this administration and the federal overseers of our financial markets and banking industry has real, painful consequences. Not just for those who have lost money, retirement savings and jobs, but for the taxpayers who are stuck with footing the bill for the epic collapse of AIG's federally regulated financial business. It is notable that the state-regulated insurance subsidiaries of AIG remain profitable.

Indeed, AIG is the largest private workers' compensation insurer in California. We can only imagine how much worse the company's holding company collapse could have been, and how much more directly nurses and workers across the nation would have been impacted, if state solvency laws had been preempted as H.R. 5840 would allow. One thing is certain: the ability of Treasury to preempt state laws will weaken oversight by the nation's strongest state regulators, not enhance it.

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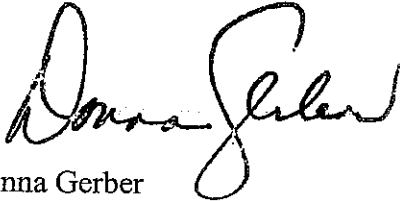
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In the midst of one of the worst financial crises of this nation's history, we do not think that Congress should be fast tracking a deregulatory proposal whose full impacts are not understood. We respectfully ask that this bill be pulled from the suspension calendar and sent back to committee so that these issues can be studied more thoroughly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Gerber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "G".

Donna Gerber
Director, Government Relations

Cc: Congressman Kanjorski
Congressman Barney Frank, Chairman of Financial Services