

CAPITOL OFFICE:  
1034 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-2472

MANKATO OFFICE:  
527½ SOUTH FRONT STREET  
MANKATO, MN 56001  
(507) 388-2149

ROCHESTER OFFICE:  
1202½ 7TH STREET NW,  
SUITE 211  
ROCHESTER, MN 55901  
(507) 388-2149

TOLL FREE #:  
(877) 846-9259



**TIMOTHY J. WALZ**  
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
FIRST DISTRICT, MINNESOTA  
[WWW.WALZ.HOUSE.GOV](http://WWW.WALZ.HOUSE.GOV)

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE  
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

December 5, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

We write on behalf of a small group of Minnesotans facing extreme health insurance rate increases in the individual market, and urge you to include targeted emergency tax relief in the final FY 2017 federal funding package in order to provide a lifeline to hardworking Americans.

As you may know, about two percent of Minnesotans who are not eligible for existing tax credits are facing premium increases for coverage in the individual market, with rate hikes averaging from 50% to 67% starting next year. This is an undue burden on our constituents. More Minnesotans have coverage now than ever before, but the population in the individual market includes many Americans who were uninsured for years. Many of them are less healthy than the average American and more expensive to cover. Many others are farmers, small business owners, or retirees who do not yet qualify for Medicare. These constituents have unique income structures that make them ineligible for tax credits but unable to afford the cost of premiums. We urge you to keep their needs in mind and consider either expanding the tax credit eligibility pool to higher income levels, or reexamining how incomes are calculated for the purposes of tax credit eligibility.

This emergency tax relief creates a lifeline for these Americans to “buy down” the cost of their premiums so they can better afford coverage in 2017. It will help bridge the gap for this population while state and federal policymakers work together to enact a permanent bipartisan fix for this narrow segment of the insurance market.

The urgency of this crisis cannot be overstated. Any emergency tax relief should be targeted to help any consumer who cannot afford their individual insurance policy premium, regardless of whether they purchase the coverage through their state exchange (e.g., MNsure) or the federal exchange. This will help foster the robust, competitive market we need in order to provide these constituents with affordable, comprehensive and quality care.

As advocates for our constituents facing significant premium increases, we ask that you include tax relief for affected individuals and their families as an anomaly in the Continuing Resolution

or any other must-pass FY 2017 appropriations legislation. As you know, rate increases will go into effect on January 1, 2017; our constituents cannot afford to wait another year for solutions. They need targeted emergency assistance now.

We are committed to solving this problem in a bipartisan way. We appreciate your consideration, and look forward to working with you, and our state and local stakeholders to make healthcare more affordable and accessible for all.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Walz  
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



Richard M. Nolan  
Member of Congress