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### STATEMENT BY ROBERT GREENSTEIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ON THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP'S NEW HEALTH REFORM LEGISLATION

The congressional leadership's new health reform legislation builds upon the Senate-passed bill to extend insurance coverage to 32 million Americans while reducing the federal budget deficit over both the near and long term. By making critical improvements in the Senate bill, many of which were proposed by President Obama, the new measure covers more people and cuts the deficit more than the Senate bill.

By extending coverage to 32 million people by 2019, the legislation — that is, the combination of the Senate-passed health bill and companion legislation making certain changes in that bill — would mean that 95 percent of all legal residents in America would have health insurance within a decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The CBO estimate also shows that the legislation is fiscally responsible, reducing the deficit by \$138 billion over the next ten years and by about one-half of 1 percent of the gross domestic product over the following decade. The legislation also includes an extensive array of provisions that show considerable promise for slowing the growth rate of health care costs more substantially over the long haul.

If enacted, this legislation would represent a signal achievement. It would produce the largest gains in health coverage since the enactment of Medicare and Medicaid 45 years ago, take important initial steps to contain health care cost growth, and improve our long-term fiscal outlook by reducing deficits in coming decades. The President and Congress have what could be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring it to fruition.

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