

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 4, 2009

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Sam Johnson stands up to protect access to award-winning care

Today U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson (3rd Dist.-Texas) took aim at a provision tucked into the Democrats' 2,000 page healthcare bill that will reduce access to healthcare and torpedo hundreds of jobs in physician-owned hospitals, including five existing Third District hospitals that employ 950 people and three under development that will have 310 employees.

“This is about freedom of choice, free enterprise and competition. If Third District residents want to have access to high quality, award-winning physician-owned hospitals, then they ought to be able to have that right. Protecting access to care is about giving patients the right to choose what works best for them. This is America! Some leaders in Washington want to take that right to choose away and I won't stand for it,” declared Johnson.

Buried inside the 20 pound recently introduced Affordable Health Care for America Act, H.R. 3962, is a provision will ban further construction of doctor-owned specialty hospitals and prohibit existing ones from expanding. There are 235 physician-owned hospitals in 35 states, including 68 in Texas. Nationwide these facilities employ more than 65,000 people with a total payroll of over \$3 billion.

There also are 124 projects under development in 22 states. If they are able to open, they will provide jobs for nearly 25,000 people. Almost \$5 billion in current investments in these pending hospital facilities nationwide will be wasted if the House Democrat health care bill becomes law.

As a result of this provision affecting physician-owned hospitals, three new hospital additions in the Third District will be shut down before they ever go online. For the Third District alone, this pending hospital provision will spark a loss of an estimated \$108 million in investments already made in just the three construction projects alone. This also amounts to \$13,950,000 in lost payroll and a loss of roughly 310 new jobs in the Dallas and McKinney areas that would have been created if these new facilities were allowed to open and operate as intended.

The bill also restricts the growth of *existing* physician-owned hospitals to the point that they are not allowed to add one more hospital bed, improve the ICU, or develop a pediatric unit, for example. In the Third District, this harmful, anti-expansion measure jeopardizes five facilities that boast 950 employees, \$50,250,000 in payroll and \$7, 100,000 in taxes in Garland, Plano, and Richardson.

The complex hospital provision is just one of the hundreds of reckless proposals coming out of Washington DC's effort to control personal healthcare decisions. The Act also hurts seniors with sweeping cuts to Medicare, forces Americans to buy health insurance, taxes all Americans who do not purchase “government approved” health coverage, limits personal choices and individual decisions, and jeopardizes the health insurance Americans already have – and often times like.

“President Obama, Speaker Pelosi, and the Democrats need to start listening to the American people and bring both parties to the table to come up with a true bipartisan solution,” said Johnson.

Johnson represents portions of Dallas and Collin Counties.

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