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(West Windsor, NJ) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today visited the Caliper Corporation, a human resource consulting firm, to talk about how the new health reform law will strengthen employer-based health coverage for small and large businesses. Holt was joined by NJ Citizen Action and the Main Street Alliance, a network of small businesses supportive of health care reform.

“When I supported health care reform I thought of the business owners – large and small – who told with of their struggles with the rising costs of covering their employees and their families. The new law supports our small businesses by providing critical tax relief and allowing businesses to join together to get coverage at better rates. It supports all employees by providing critical consumer protections,” Holt said.

“The absence of health care reform was the Achilles’ heel of America’s entrepreneurial mindset. When Rep. Rush Holt stood for healthcare reform, he stood for the brilliant Bell Labs engineers in his Holmdel district, who once dreamt to own a business and carry their inventions further, create jobs for themselves and others, but had their dreams cut short because they could not afford health insurance for themselves, their families, and the employees they would hire. Provisions like the small business tax credits and health insurance exchanges gives small businesses and entrepreneurs the ability to compete with larger corporations for skilled staff. When he voted for health care reform, Rep. Holt not only demonstrated courage but he planted new seeds for the future of the United States and gave the American enterprise a whole new beginning,” said Samia Bahsoun, owner of S2Associates International, a Telecom Consulting firm in Holmdel.

“The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is a major step toward making health care

more affordable and accessible for small businesses and the communities we serve. We have finally made it clear that quality, affordable health care is a right for everyone including small businesses, our families and our employees. We thank Congressman Holt for being our champion for health reform and giving small businesses a fighting chance," said Crystal Snedden, Small Business Organizer for the NJ Main Street Alliance.

Holt highlighted what health care reform would mean to employers, their employees and their families. Reform will help small businesses by:

- Providing tax credits for health care. This year, small businesses with fewer than 25 employees that provide their workers insurance will benefit from a tax credit of up to 35 percent of their health care expenses. This will help nearly 18,000 small businesses in Central New Jersey and 60 percent of small businesses nationwide.
- Offering more health insurance options for small businesses where they can purchase insurance at group rates through a new insurance marketplace.

Reform will help all businesses by:

- Stabilizing premiums. Businesses will be protected from sudden, arbitrary rate hikes because a worker or family member gets sick. These businesses also will benefit from new rules preventing insurers from charging more (or excluding coverage altogether) because a worker has a pre-existing condition like cancer, heart disease, or pregnancy.
- Providing new consumer protections. All employers and employees will benefit from new common sense rules of the road. Insurers will be prohibited from dropping coverage if someone becomes sick and prohibited from setting annual or lifetime limits beyond which the insurer refuses to pay, leaving families facing bankruptcy. Insurance companies will have to spend more (at least 80 percent) of each premium dollar on providing healthcare.
- Establishing a reinsurance program for early retiree health plans that would help those plans remain viable.

- Lowering costs over the long-term by reducing the paperwork doctors have to fill out; by encouraging coordinated medical care to reduce redundant tests and procedures; by switching to electronic medical records from paper ones; and by limiting waste, fraud, and abuse.

- Eliminating the hidden tax that everyone pays on their insurance for treating the uninsured.

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