

Health reform turned two years old last week, and I've heard from many in New Jersey who have been personally and positively affected by the new law.

A mother from Kendall Park wrote to say that her 24-year-old son could not afford health insurance – until health reform enabled him to join her insurance plan. A retiree from Monroe Township says that he was struggling to afford his prescription drugs after falling into the Medicare “donut hole,” but health reform is helping him stay afloat. A small business owner in Middletown says that she is depending upon health reform’s new tax credits to help her continue to provide insurance coverage to her employees. And a man from Eatontown says that, because he broke his back several years ago, no insurer will cover him – but beginning in 2014, health reform will guarantee that he is always insurable despite this pre-existing condition.

These New Jerseyans are far from alone. In the 12th Congressional District alone, more than 2,000 young adults have gained access to health care through their parents’ insurance. More than 17,000 small businesses are now eligible for tax credits to help them to provide health insurance to their employees. More than 100,000 seniors have gained access to free wellness visits and preventive services, including mammograms and colonoscopies, helping to maintain their health and detect potentially dangerous diseases. And more than 8,000 seniors who had fallen into the Medicare “donut hole” have gained relief from crushing prescription drug costs. Of course, many of the reform’s most significant benefits still lie in the future, as tens of millions of uninsured Americans will gain access to affordable health coverage, and as insurance companies will begin to give more complete, accessible care to those already insured.

Maybe you have been following the Supreme Court’s recent discussion of the constitutionality of health reform. The fact is that the law’s basic structure has historically been embraced by leaders on both sides of the aisle – including many who for political reasons now claim to question the bill’s legitimacy.

It is a principle of modern, advanced society that people should not be left to suffer from denial of basic health care and that health care can and should be provided population-wide, whether by tax-funded programs like Medicare, private insurance programs with universal participation in the risk pool, or some other combination of programs. I believe that this will become a lasting and important part of America’s social contract – as widely appreciated as Social Security and Medicare are today.

## **U.S. Capitol Historical Society Student Essay Contest Now Open**

What do citizens need to know about how government works and how can they learn more? How can an individual become involved in the political process? What difference can one person make? These are weighty questions for our country, and the U.S. Capitol Historical Society is seeking thoughtful responses for its first-ever student essay contest.

The contest is open to students in two groups, grades 6-8 and 9-12, and the winners will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to D.C. to present their essay at the annual meeting of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. Entries must be postmarked or received no later than June 15, 2012.

Further information is [available online](#).

## **Deadline to Claim Stop-Loss Payments Extended**

Under a law passed by Congress in 2009, soldiers and veterans whose military service was involuntarily extended after September 11 may be eligible for a special, retroactive stop-loss payment.

If the military service of you or a loved one was involuntarily extended between September 11, 2001 and September 30, 2009, please visit the [stop-loss special pay page](#) of the Defense Department's website to learn more. You may apply to receive \$500 for each month served in stop-loss status. The Pentagon recently extended until October 21 the deadline to apply for this payment.

Sincerely,

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress