



Senator Lincoln: Whose Side Are You On?

New Analysis Shows Senator Lincoln Has Taken \$717,882 from Special Interests Opposed to Real Health Care Reform

An analysis of campaign contributions shows that **Senator Lincoln has taken \$717,882 from insurance and HMO interests during her career.**¹ In fact, in 2009, Senator Lincoln ranks 9th among all senators in the amount of campaign contributions received from insurance interests.²

These same special interests are spending nearly \$5 million per week fighting against health care reform,³ and one of their top targets is the public health insurance option—the heart of real reform that will be crucial to lowering rising health care costs and expanding high-quality, affordable coverage to more Americans.

For example, the health insurance trade group, America's Health Insurance Plans, which is one of the top organizations putting resources into the health care debate, has made clear that they are opposed to the creation of a public health insurance option.⁴

In public statements and votes, Senator Lincoln has been unclear what her position is on the public health insurance option. Recently, she voted twice against the public health insurance option, and appears to be siding with insurance and HMO interests over the American public. A recent poll shows that 77% of Americans want the choice of a public option in health care reform,⁵ and in Arkansas, 55% of people support the public option.⁶

Whose side is Senator Lincoln on? Big insurance and health interests, or the American public and her constituents?

Senator Lincoln has received over \$717,000 from insurance and health interests in her career:

- According to federal campaign records, Senator Lincoln has received \$717,882 in campaign contributions from insurance and HMO interests during her career.⁷
- To date in 2009, Senator Lincoln ranked 9th among all senators in receiving contributions from insurance interests and 4th among all senators in receiving contributions from HMO interests.⁸ In addition, over her career, Senator Lincoln ranks 14th among all senators in receiving contributions from HMO interests.⁹

¹ Contribution figures compiled by Public Campaign Action Fund, using data from the Center for Responsive Politics. Accessed via <http://www.opensecrets.org> between September 28-October 1, 2009. Figures current as of June 30, 2009 based on the most updated Federal Election Commission data available

² Analysis conducted by Public Campaign Action Fund using data from the Center for Responsive Politics.

³ Public Campaign Action Fund, September 15, 2009 http://www.campaignmoney.org/HMO_insurance_spend_to_kill_reform

⁴ "AHIP: All For Reforms, But Not Government Competition," National Journal, August 20, 2009

<http://undertheinfluence.nationaljournal.com/2009/08/ahip-all-for-reforms-but-not-c.php>

⁵ Survey USA poll, August 19, 2009

<http://www.surveyusa.com/client/PollReport.aspx?g=5ba17aa2-f1b9-4445-a6b8-62b9d1ba8693>

⁶ Research 2000 Poll for Daily Kos. MoE 4%, September 8, 2009 - September 10, 2009

<http://www.dailykos.com/statepoll/2009/9/10/AR/371>

⁷ Analysis conducted by Public Campaign Action Fund using data from the Center for Responsive Politics

⁸ Analysis conducted by Public Campaign Action Fund using data from the Center for Responsive Politics

⁹ Analysis conducted by Public Campaign Action Fund using data from the Center for Responsive Politics

Senator Lincoln recently voted twice against the public health insurance option:

- On September 29th, Senator Lincoln voted against two amendments in the Senate Finance Committee that would have added a public health insurance option to that committee's health care legislation.¹⁰

Senator Lincoln has made statements that are critical of the public health insurance option:

- Senator Lincoln has said, "I would not support a solely government-funded public option. We can't afford that."¹¹
- In her statement before the Senate Finance Committee voted public option amendments, she said, "We can achieve these goals, stabilize the cost of coverage for Arkansans who have health insurance, and expand coverage to the uninsured and underinsured without creating a purely public, new government program, which most Arkansans do not support."¹²

The public health insurance option is key to real health care reform—it's the best way to keep insurance companies honest, and crucial to lowering the out-of-control cost of health insurance. In addition, it's critical to expanding affordable, quality health care to more Americans, and ensuring a range of health insurance choices are available to individuals, small businesses, and families.

As several leading experts and lawmakers have said:

"A public option must be created to provide true choice to consumers or reform will fail to truly fix the root of the severe problems that have been caused in large part by the greedy demands of Wall Street." – Wendell Potter, former CIGNA Vice President of Corporate Communications¹³

"... a public plan will accomplish many of our most important goals... It will force many insurers that have been shielded and protected from competition for far too long to compete with a plan that provides comprehensive care at an affordable rate. It will, most importantly, give all Americans a choice." –Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY)¹⁴

"Our job is to protect the American people, not protect insurance company profits. The American people have asked for real solutions that protect their families and their economic security—a public option does just that." –Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV)¹⁵

Public support for a public health insurance option has been strong through the health care debate: a recent poll found 77% of Americans want the choice of a public option with health care reform.¹⁶

It is clear that regular Americans want a strong public option, and that its creation makes sense to ensure real and needed reform of our current system. But with insurance and HMO interests working to undermine real reform and opposing the public option, Senator Lincoln's position on the public option begs the question: "Whose side are you on?"

¹⁰ Rockefeller Amendment, Senate Finance Committee, September 29, 2009 and Schumer Amendment, Senate Finance Committee, September 29, 2009 <http://thepage.time.com/vote-list-senate-finances-public-option-amendments/>

¹¹ "Lincoln: Public Option Too Expensive," *Arkansas News*, September 1, 2009 <http://arkansasnews.com/2009/09/01/lincoln-public-option-too-expensive/>

¹² "Lincoln: We Can Accomplish Health Care Reform Without A Public Option," September 29, 2009 <http://tpmdc.talkingpointsmemo.com/2009/09/lincoln-we-can-accomplish-health-care-reform-without-a-public-option.php>

¹³ "Pelosi Stands By Public Option: We Won't Pass The 'Private Insurance Profit Perpetuation Act,'" Think Progress, September 15, 2009 <http://thinkprogress.org/2009/09/15/pelosi-potter/>

¹⁴ Senator Charles Schumer's Senate floor speech, June 23, 2009 <http://www.c-spanarchives.org/congress/?q=node/77531&id=9002664>

¹⁵ "Senate Finance Committee Votes Against Including Public Option In Reform Bill," *All Headline News*, September 30, 2009

<http://www.allheadline.com/articles/7016551230>

¹⁶ Survey USA poll, August 19, 2009, <http://www.surveyyusa.com/client/PollReport.aspx?g=5ba17aa2-f1b9-4445-a6b8-62b9d1ba8693>