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Sister Simone Campbell's Keynote Statement in Support of Healthcare for All

Washington DC: Sister Simone Campbell, Executive Director of NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, today delivered the following statement as a keynote speaker at the Interfaith Service of Witness and Prayer for healthcare reform:

In my experience it is rare when a moral stance, business necessity, and political opportunity all coincide. But this is what we have now!

The measure of all of our faiths is how well we respond to the needs of those around us. My Christian faith leads me to know that Jesus was about healing. This challenges me in today's modern world to find ways of healing for all people. We can no longer allow people in our rich country to go without healthcare. It is morally shocking to my conscience that we allow as many people as live in California and Illinois combined to live daily without health insurance and, even more, live without realistic access to healthcare providers. It is for me a faith mandate to change this immoral reality. Creating such change is one way to embody God's loving presence in our world. This is how we can be light in these challenging times.

Healthcare reform is also a business necessity. The rising costs of health insurance premiums are squeezing businesses large and small. In challenging economic times more and more employers are cutting back on benefits to employees and charging employees more for healthcare. The working poor are the ones most often losing coverage or never having access to healthcare. It is not economically sustainable to have ever escalating costs and more and more people without access to essential medical services. The marketplace has failed in the delivery of healthcare. We as a nation were foolish to think that healthcare can run on a completely free market model. In a medical emergency, it is impossible to shop around for better options. Healthcare is more of a ministry and a response to people in need. Something in this solely business model needs to change. So faith and business are moving in the same direction.

It is this confluence that brings us together this afternoon to make it known to our representatives that "We the People" demand healthcare reform. We are being told that it is too expensive, too complicated, too scary. But I tell you that the current situation is too expensive, too exclusive and too immoral to tolerate. We need healthcare reform now that is inclusive of all, accessible for all, affordable for all, and accountable to all. We need to fix the broken system that has people ill and dying without basic care. So let us pray, let us speak up, let us lobby, let us not be silent. Let us exercise our faith commitment and our constitutional responsibility. Together, We the People can make this change happen. Let us insist that the time is now for inclusive, accessible, affordable, accountable, quality healthcare for all.

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NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation. Founded in 1971 by 47 Catholic sisters, NETWORK is supported by thousands of groups and individuals committed to working for social and economic justice. For more information, see www.networklobby.org.