



# AFSCME News

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

**Contact:** Gregory King

202-429-1145

## McEntee Says: “Health Care for America NOW!”

Statement of AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee

National Press Club

July 8, 2008

On behalf of AFSCME’s 1.6 million active and retiree members, I am happy to be here at this moment and with these allies to launch a great national effort to provide quality, affordable health care we can all count on.

For decades, we have been working to expand the American Dream to include health care for all. Year in and year out, we hear promises and pledges from politicians. But still, nothing gets done.

Meanwhile, millions of Americans live without health care. Millions more are routinely denied the health care they need by insurance companies that put profits over the needs of patients. Our businesses can’t compete in the world economy because of escalating health care costs. The middle class is being choked. State and local government budgets are squeezed by skyrocketing costs. We have a broken system that leaves too many people on their own at the mercy of insurance companies.

Today, we say: “Enough is enough. No more needless delays. No more idle discussions. No more political posturing.” We’ve talked long enough. Now we need action. We need Health Care for America Now.

We know this won’t be easy. There is nothing we can’t achieve if we put our minds and our hearts and our votes together. All we need is the political will. That’s why we’ll be organizing and lobbying, building a grassroots army to make 2009 the year we’re going to get health care that works for all of us – that gives people care they can afford with a doctor of their choice.

Today, we’ve got a message for our elected officials: If you put profits ahead of patients, get out of the way. Don’t tell us about reforms that lack a guarantee of coverage. Don’t tell us about taxing the health care benefit employees receive on the job. Don’t tell us that insurance company practices don’t need to be regulated. Don’t tell us that \$10,000 deductibles are OK.

Those ideas won’t work because they don’t address two critical things we need to do: control escalating health care costs and guarantee access to everyone.

We don’t have time to waste. We’ve got work to do. If you support quality, affordable health care for all, it is time to roll up your sleeves, get ready for work, and get on board.

# # #

*AFSCME’s 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and prosperity and opportunity for all working families.*

**American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO**  
1625 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-5687 [www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org) TEL (202) 429-1145 FAX (202) 429-1120