



THE VOICE OF FOOD RETAIL

Feeding Families  Enriching Lives

March 23, 2017

The Honorable Paul Davis Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI)¹ writes to express support for the American Health Care Act (H.R. 1628). The legislation addresses several areas that we hope will help alleviate administrative problems of concern to FMI member companies, as well as fees they face, while also providing additional flexibility to offer expanded employee health benefits.

FMI's food retailer and wholesaler members comprise a major part of the employer-sponsored health care system that is responsible for 175 million Americans' health care coverage. Just as FMI has engaged on policy surrounding the Affordable Care Act, FMI supports efforts to increase the ability of our members to offer affordable health care coverage that meets the diverse needs of the workforce, such as protecting employers from taxes or fees on health benefits and providing more flexibility in constructing health plans, such as that needed to implement successful employee wellness programs.

FMI supports changes in the American Health Care Act and commends the House Committee Chairmen and Leadership for addressing many of these concerns by not exposing employer health benefits to taxes or fees while including provisions to remove employer penalties, restore individuals' ability to use Flexible Spending Accounts to purchase over-the-counter medicines, and at least temporarily stopping the "Cadillac Tax" on certain health plans.

As changes are inevitably made as this legislation moves forward, FMI members look forward to working to address potential pharmacy access issues, to ensuring associates who are offered but decline employer-provided coverage do not unnecessarily drive up costs, and to continuing to increase flexibility and mitigate costs associated with our members' ability to offer employee health benefits, wellness initiatives, and pharmacy services.

Sincerely,

Leslie G. Sarasin
President and Chief Executive Officer
Food Marketing Institute

¹ FMI proudly advocates on behalf of food retailers and wholesalers. FMI's members operate nearly 40,000 retail food stores and 25,000 pharmacies, employing 3.4 million people and representing a combined annual sales volume of \$650 billion. FMI membership covers the spectrum of diverse venues where food is sold, including single owner grocery stores, large multi-store supermarket chains, mixed retail stores, and food wholesalers.