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Employers' Reform Position Details Their Readiness to Tackle Tough Decisions to Solve Health Care Problem

Association's Chairman J. Randall MacDonald Testified at House Committee Hearing

Washington, DC— J. Randall MacDonald, Senior Vice President, Human Resources of the IBM Corporation and Chairman of the HR Policy Association Board of Directors testified today before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee about employer-sponsored health insurance and the HR Policy Association's position on reforming the U.S. health care system. MacDonald said, "A successful health care reform agenda will build a patient-centered, accountable and competitive health care market place that delivers effective outcomes and improved unit costs." (For MacDonald's testimony, please visit the Ways and Means [website](#).) In advance of the hearing, the HR Policy Association released its plan, [An Agenda For Mutual Responsibility](#).

An Agenda For Mutual Responsibility is written from the employer perspective and is based on the belief that all key stakeholders must compromise and accept responsibility to build upon the nation's existing combination of employer coverage, a private market, and government programs. The plan also makes a recommendation to ensure that all Americans have health care coverage within a sustainable system. Significantly, the Association's position is based in significant part on its own experience in building health care initiatives, including Retiree Health Access[®] and the Transparency in Pharmaceutical Purchasing SolutionsSM initiatives.

The HR Policy Association, an association of the chief human resource officers of more than 270 of the largest corporations in the United States, represents almost every industry in the United States. Its members are responsible for billions of dollars worth of health procurement decisions for employees, spouses, dependents and retirees. According to an Association survey, 83 percent of members believe the current health care system is unsustainable, and 94 percent agree that efforts to rein in health care costs have been inadequate. Further, Association members reject the creation of a government-run single payer system; instead, they support building upon the employer-based system and changing the private insurance market to make it more accessible and affordable for people without employer benefits to get coverage.

Said Johnna G. Torsone, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer of Pitney Bowes Inc., and chair of HR Policy Association's Health Care Policy Committee, "While we applaud the efforts of the Administration, Congress and other stakeholder groups to reform the U.S. health care system, we recognize that the flaws in our existing system are too complex for any one sector of our society to fix. We hope that the ideas presented from an employer perspective in *An Agenda For Mutual Responsibility* will contribute to the discussion and through tough decisions, help find the best solution."

The objectives of the HR Policy Association's health care reform agenda presented in *An Agenda For Mutual Responsibility* are the following:

- Significantly improve the employer-based system to ensure its continued existence;
- Adopt a comprehensive national reform agenda;
- Significantly improve wellness, prevention and primary care;
- Create a competitive and accountable marketplace;
- Control costs and improve quality;
- Ensure all Americans have health care coverage; and
- Assure adoption of interoperable health information technology

An Agenda For Mutual Responsibility also outlines specific responsibilities for stakeholders – the Federal government, employers, individuals, providers and insurers. The Association stresses that it is necessary for all stakeholders to assume a role in health care reform.

“We believe that the problems plaguing our health care system have been studied at length, but now is the time to make tough choices and act. Under our position, each and every constituent and stakeholder must share in the burdens of the health care system, not just the benefits,” said Jeffrey C. McGuinness, President and CEO of HR Policy Association.

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HR Policy Association brings together the chief human resource officers of more than 260 of the largest corporations in the United States who are concerned about the direction of HR public policy and practices in the United States and globally. Representing nearly every major industry, HR Policy members have a combined market capitalization of more than \$7.5 trillion and employ more than 18 million employees worldwide. For more information visit www.hrpolicy.org

To download *An Agenda For Mutual Responsibility*, please visit:
<http://www.hrpolicy.org/downloads/2009/HealthCareReform.pdf>