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Carmen Emerson, a voice of Faith.



From Carmen Emerson, Ministerial Intern, First Unitarian Church (Albuquerque)

"I am here today as a voice of faith: all of the world's wisdom traditions remind us that we are connected, and that we have a responsibility to take care of the most vulnerable in our society. The Hebrew scriptures call us to "act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). The New Testament Gospels call us to "love our neighbors as ourselves," and we are also reminded by Jesus that that which we do "for the least of us" - for the hungry, the thirsty, the imprisoned, the lonely, the sick - that which we do for the least of these, we do for him (Matthew 25:34-45). The Qu'ran reminds us to "do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer you meet..." (Muhsin Khan 4:36). As we heard from our Native American friends earlier this afternoon, we are all connected. We are all connected - and it matters that we pay attention to healthcare reform. It is a moral issue, and it is

a justice issue.

I am also here today as a voice of reason: We need to understand that our nation can be strengthened through the public option. This matters to me, as a citizen of the United States. It stands to reason that healthy children, healthy adults and healthy families are productive, creative members of a strong and healthy nation. From personal experience I know what it means to be distracted by illness and entering despair because there is no access to healthcare coverage. When we are distracted by our illnesses and by the inadequacies of a healthcare system that may doom us to a life of poverty or early demise, we are not creative and productive. We are simply scared, and more easily taken advantage of again and again by the status quo who trade in fear. We are a better people than this - and we have a responsibility to fix the healthcare system. We are a better people than we have been this summer, and we need to have the courage and the civility to move forward with this reform so that American really is a land of opportunity, healthcare, and justice for all.

Healthcare is a human right, not a status quo privilege. We need to tell our Congress and our President to trust us with the facts, and to get on with healthcare reform!"