



Florida House of Representatives House Democratic Office

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Speaker Marco Rubio
420 The Capitol
402 S. Monroe St
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Speaker Rubio:

As the specter of the loss of an important health care safety net nears, we are hearing about negotiations between legislators and stakeholders. Although I am delighted to read that progress is being made to avoid the impending sunset of No-Fault Auto Insurance, I am concerned that all discussions seem to be taking place out of the public eye. There is no prior notice of meetings, no hearings for the public to attend, no media reporting what issues are being discussed. That is why I am renewing my suggestion that it would be best for the legislature to extend PIP for one year to give us the opportunity to properly do what we failed to do last session: complete a full and open, public examination and make a well informed determination of how to fix the deficiencies in the current PIP system.

During the regular legislative session, we did not even hear the PIP bill that was filed and only considered proposed PIP legislation for the first time in the Rules and Calendar Committee. No substantive committees that should have heard PIP reform bills (e.g., insurance, health care, judiciary) were used except to hold one workshop on the issue in general. Further, I recall that at that committee meeting, insurance industry lobbyists advised us that they had received and commented on drafts of that bill days before the legislators received them.

Sadly, history is repeating itself. Discussions are happening between a small, circle of House and Senate leaders without the scrutiny of the public or media. A final product may be ironed out in secret and the legislature given the choice to take it or leave it in an abbreviated special session. Instead of making such important policy in private and outside the reach of the public and the press, we should be giving these issues full, open and thoughtful consideration. There should be draft legislation and filed bills (that will be heard) available to the public with a reasonable period of time in advance of meetings so members and the public can make meaningful

comments and decisions. Just because we have not applied much of the Sunshine Law to our own conduct, doesn't mean we should avoid conducting our business in the sunshine.

We all agree that reforms need to be made to the PIP system. However, this year's legislature did not give the issue a fair shot, despite the upcoming sunset. I believe that had we properly addressed this issue during the regular session, we would not be in this position today. That said, rather than rush to slap together a compromise in private, we ought to give the legislature an opportunity to craft a real solution in public and in plain sight.

Sincerely,

Dan Gelber
Democratic Leader