

Congressman Steve King and 105 House Members sent the following letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi regarding marriage penalties included in both the House-passed and Senate-passed health care bills.

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

While there are many points of disagreement on the pending health care bill, one area where hopefully there can be bipartisan agreement is that the federal government should not penalize people simply for being married.

Recent press reports have highlighted that the new subsidy structures in both the House- and Senate-passed bills contain significant marriage penalties. For example, in the House-passed bill, an unmarried couple with income of \$25,000 each would have their combined premiums capped at \$3,076 per year. If the couple gets married, and thus has a combined annual income of \$50,000, their annual premium cap jumps to \$5,160 for the same insurance. In short, there is a \$2,084 penalty for simply being married. While under the Senate-passed bill it would be less, the marriage penalty would still exceed \$1,500 a year.

Republicans and Democrats have worked together in the past to reduce the marriage penalty that exists in the tax code for all couples and to eliminate it for those making \$68,000 or less. After eliminating the most significant marriage penalty for these families, Congress should not now impose a brand new one.

Simply put, government policy should not be constructed in such a way that either discourages individuals from marrying or provides an incentive for couples to divorce. The imposition of a marriage penalty on middle class families has no place as part of any health care bill.