



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AUSTIN

December 10, 2013

Ms. Julia Rathgeber
Commissioner
Texas Department of Insurance
PO Box 149104
Austin, TX 78714

Dear Commissioner Rathgeber:

We appreciate your efforts to gain public input on the proposed navigator rules; however, we are concerned that the timeline you have set forth does not adequately allow for members of the public, navigators, and elected officials to meaningfully participate in the process.

Public testimony is an important part of the rulemaking process. It allows time for those who will be regulated to explain how rules will impact the way they do their jobs, whether those rules will needlessly hamper their work, and how the rules may be improved. Members of the Legislature may also give important background information on legislative intent. The process should be designed to ensure sufficient time for this vital input to be both heard and implemented. The timeline you have proposed does neither.

Holding a public hearing on December 20 impedes public participation. First, navigators face an important deadline on December 23 – only three days after the scheduled hearing. That date is the new deadline for consumers to select a health plan in order to be covered by January 1. Navigators should be spending the time leading up to that deadline helping as many consumers as possible sign up for health plans. Under your proposed timeline, they will instead need to divert time and resources towards preparing for and attending a hearing on these proposed rules. Second, December 20 is the Friday before Christmas and the day most schools break for the holidays. This timing will make it difficult for most members of the public and elected officials to travel to Austin and attend the hearing.

We want to work with TDI to finalize rules that will protect Texas consumers while also enabling navigators to help Texans enroll in health plans. To do so, we respectfully request that you extend the proposed deadlines, postponing the hearing date to after the holidays and extending the comment period deadline to January 31, 2014. This will give elected officials and members of the public a greater opportunity to be involved. It also allows navigators to give important testimony without taking away from their duties to help enroll consumers in health plans.

Thank you for considering an extension of the timeline to ensure meaningful and robust public testimony on these rules. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Hon. Alma A. Allen
House District 131



Hon. Carol Alvarado
House District 145



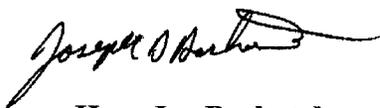
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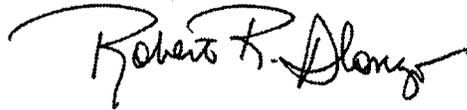
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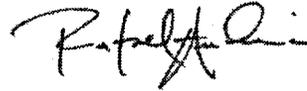
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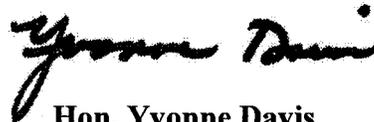
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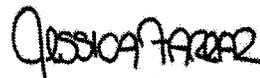
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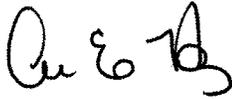
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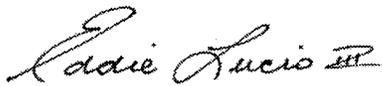
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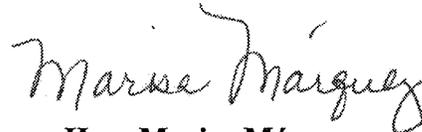
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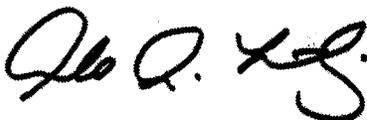
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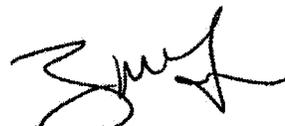
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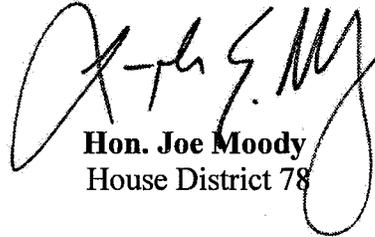
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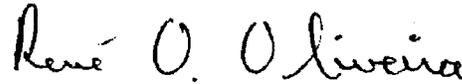
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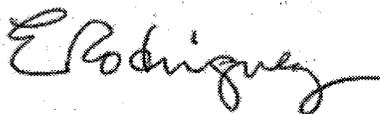
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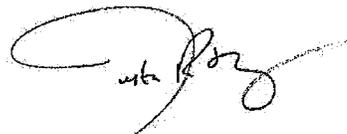
Hon. Richard Peña Raymond
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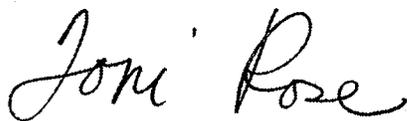
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