

Mass. group wants vote on health question

November 10 2006

Massachusetts advocates for universal healthcare filed suit Friday to put an amendment guaranteeing medical coverage for state residents on the 2008 ballot.

The suit, filed by the Committee for Health Care for Massachusetts, asked the state Supreme Judicial Court to order Secretary of State William Galvin to put the Health Care Constitutional Amendment before voters, unless the Legislature gives it a second and final vote as required by state law.

State lawmakers passed the measure in 2004, the committee said in a news release, but because the amendment reached lawmakers as a citizen petition, a second approval is required.

The amendment would require the Legislature and governor to enact laws that would guarantee access to coverage, but it did not outline how the reform should be approached.

Committee co-chair John Goodson said state officials showed a willingness to address one aspect of the health insurance issue by expanding access to those who need it the most.

"But the larger and more challenging crisis of underinsurance demands that affordability be continuously confronted by our elected representatives," he said. "The amendment will ensure that this process is sustained."

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