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September 4, 2012

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
The New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 11224

RE: S.7787 (Seward) / A.10784 (Morelle) – Supplementary Uninsured/ Underinsured Motorist Insurance

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I write as an insurance consumer advocate and a former insurance analyst with the NYS Consumer Protection Board to urge you to sign into law S.7787/ A.10784, a pro-consumer bill that will help protect New Yorkers by promoting a low-cost but important part of the financial protection that auto insurance provides: Supplementary Uninsured/ Underinsured Motorist (SUM) coverage.

SUM insurance is little understood by consumers. For a very low premium, SUM insurance covers drivers and their loved ones in the event of an accident with an underinsured, uninsured or hit-and-run driver. While many drivers act responsibly by purchasing more liability insurance than required by statute – thereby taking an extra step to protect others – they do not realize that to protect themselves they must also increase the SUM limits on their policy.

Your signature on this bill will help strengthen New Yorker drivers' financial safety nets. It is good public policy.

I'm the Executive Director and co-founder of United Policyholders - a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization that is an information resource and a voice for insurance consumers in all 50 states. I had the privilege of working in Albany during your father's administration. We have worked on numerous insurance issues in New York over the years including the many amicus briefs we've filed and policy matters in the legislature and in coordination with the NYS Dept. of Financial Services/formerly the Insurance Department. Donations, foundation grants and volunteer labor fuel our organization. United Policyholders' Board of Directors includes the former Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court, the former Washington State Insurance Commissioner, and a current state legislator from Mississippi.

Through a "Roadmap to Preparedness" program, our organization does outreach and education to help consumers be insurance literate and buy adequate protection. This bill is consistent with that mission. One insurance consumer, Thomas Reilly – whose story was featured in the New York Daily News recently¹ – highlights what can happen to consumers who fall into this insurance gap. Mr. Reilly had purchased, at a hefty premium, one million dollars in liability insurance. It was only after an accident left Mr. Reilly seriously injured that he discovered that his liability insurance did not cover all accidents, and in fact he only had \$25,000 in SUM insurance to cover his extensive injuries. By that time it was too late to take steps to increase the protection available for himself and his family.

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This legislation will prevent more cases like Mr. Reilly's. Twenty-six other states have already adopted measures similar to those proposed by this bill – requiring that insurers offer their consumers SUM insurance an appropriate level based on their other insurance decisions, but still allowing the consumer the choice of selecting less coverage. This common sense bill will help fill a common gap in insurance policies while maintaining consumer choice.

We urge you to do the right thing for consumers like Mr. Reilly and sign this bill into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Bach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Bach, Executive Director

¹ Reuven Blau, *Transportation Advocates, Trial lawyers urge Cuomo to Sign Bill Boosting Supplemental Insurance Rates*, NY Daily News, August 20, 2012