...And the pursuit of national health: the incremental strategy toward national health insurance in the United States of America

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During the academic year 1991-1992 at the University of Minnesota, I took two courses that inspired me to focus on American health care policy: the social welfare course of professor Clarke Chambers and the social policy course of professor Larry Jacobs. When I began to think about studying national health insurance, both professors helped me to get on the right track. I particularly remember the advice given to me by professor Chambers: 1) start with the exclusion of national health insurance from the Social Security Act, and 2) read *America's Welfare State* by Edward D. Berkowitz. I did both.

Back in the Netherlands, I wrote a thesis entitled “Condition Critical: The Exclusion of a National Health Insurance Program from the Social Security Act of 1935,” based on research I did at the National Archives in Washington, DC. I thank Aloha South for helping me with the papers of the Committee on Economic Security and for giving me a personal tour of the National Archives downtown building. Professor Ali de Regt of the Sociology Department of the University of Amsterdam made constructive comments on my original thesis and also on my later work. Professor Rob Kroes of the American Studies Department of the University of Amsterdam has been my mentor since 1989 and my supervisor since 1994. I am grateful for the intellectual guidance and academic counseling he has given me over the last decade.

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In May 1997, the University of Amsterdam was visited by two American first ladies: Hillary Rodham Clinton and professor Theda Skocpol. Fortunately
I was able to participate in professor Skocpol’s masterclass, organized by the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research. I thank Theda Skocpol and my fellow participants for the constructive criticism and discussions. A few of us still meet regularly to discuss our work: Duco Bannink, Inge Bleijenbergh, Marcel Hoogenboom, and Monique Kremer. I hope I am still welcome even though my dissertation is finally finished.

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Jaap Kooijman
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