

Forwarded from Unions for Single Payer August 1, 2009  
Progressive Friends, Randy Shannon [www.beavercountyblue.org](http://www.beavercountyblue.org)

The insurance company lapdogs in Congress that told us single payer national healthcare was off the table are now eating their words!

Those who have told us that HR 676 - The National Healthcare Act would not come up for a vote this year and that we had to work for a compromise have been proven wrong!

The trade union leaders that have been hugging the insurance companies and turning their backs on the rank and file workers are now red-faced!

Today, the progressive Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, led by Congressman Weiner of NY, withdrew their motion to substitute HR 676 for HR 3200 after being promised by Speaker Nancy Pelosi that HR 676 would be introduced, debated, and voted by the full House in September!

Not since the Voting Rights Act has such a far-reaching piece of social change legislation reached the floor of the House. Progressive Democrats, independents, and liberals must unite in a massive grassroots lobby campaign during the month of August to call, visit, picket, and persuade your Congressperson to vote for HR 676 - the National Single Payer Healthcare Act when Congress reconvenes in September.

How did this happen when so many, including some trusted leaders, had already thrown in the towel on single payer national health insurance? There is a profound political groundswell underway that is shaking up all political relations and requires us to reassess the potential for radical change.

The main reason this breakthrough has occurred is the persistent growth and action of the grass-roots movement for single payer healthcare. It is led by Progressive Democrats of America, the California Nurses Association, the Physicians for a National Health Program, the All Unions Committee for Single Payer Healthcare, and Healthcare NOW, along with hundreds of local committees, in coordination with the office of Congressman John Conyers and the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

This upswell was manifested on July 30th, the national lobby day for single payer healthcare when over a thousand vocal and articulate single payer activists visited their Congresspersons and Senators after a rally at the Capitol.

The second factor that led to this breakthrough is the tremendous frustration in Congress and among the public with the pace and the character of the effort of the leadership of the Democratic Party and their supporters at the top of the trade unions and the undemocratic mass organizations like MoveOn to forge a compromise with the insurance companies that own most of the Republicans and a large number of Democrats. The people's fear and loathing of the compromising Democrats and the human-hating Republicans when lives are at stake is rising to a roar of threatening anger.

Lastly the Republican Party, which has been captured by the far-right anti-Obama, anti-communist, Christian right, neo-nazi fanatics, has taken the position that the best healthcare reform - single payer healthcare - is the greatest liability for the Democratic Party and President Obama. They believe their own propaganda: that single payer healthcare is socialism - communism - government controlled murder- etc. This has lead them to adopt the tactic of supporting the progressive Democrats' efforts for single payer, in what they believe will be an embarrassment to President Obama and House Democrats. Not surprisingly for this group of reactionaries, this is a serious miscalculation. We can only hope that the Republican cretins do not realize their mistake before the vote in September.

If they continue this tactic, then HR 676 has a very good chance of passing in the House. This event will destroy the Republican leverage in the Senate. It will lead to a completely different compromise in the reconciliation of the House and Senate bills - a compromise which will be much better for the American people. And this will lead to a tremendous battle to whip 51 Democratic Senators in line to support the reconciled bill.

Indeed we have been presented with an opportunity to wage a legislative battle that could be the most important battle of our generation. Let us all throw ourselves into an all out effort to leave no task undone to convince, pressure, and threaten our representatives to vote for HR 676 in September. As our brother, British Labor Party member Tony Benn, pointed out in the movie Sicko, national healthcare will free the American people from the oppressive fear of illness and bankruptcy, and allow us to build a more just and democratic society.