

4. Another basic right we want to protect is the right to healthcare. We would like to join other wealthy nations around the world in providing single-payer health coverage for a private medical system, eliminating the wasteful for-profit health insurance companies, a move favored by the vast majority of Americans, a move that would create 2.6 million new jobs, \$317 billion in business revenue, and \$100 billion in wages. Congressman John Conyers' H.R. 676 had 93 cosponsors last Congress and 42 thus far this year. Even if we do not get to single-payer this year, any compromise will be closer to it if there is a strong movement for it. Will you cosponsor? Can you come or ask a staff person to come to our public forum in the Lane Auditorium of the Albemarle County Office Building at 6:30 p.m. February 23rd? Would such forums be useful elsewhere in the district? How else can we help?

64 percent of Americans believe the government should provide national health insurance coverage for all, even if it would raise taxes. See CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll. May 4-6, 2007. N=1,028 adults nationwide. MoE \pm 3.

62 percent of voters believe a public health insurance plan would spend less on profits and administration. And 73 percent of voters want a choice of a private or public health insurance plan, including Democrats (77%), Independents (79%), and Republicans (63%). See poll by Lake Research January 2009.

A CBS / NY Times poll released this week found 59 percent of Americans favoring government coverage versus 32 percent preferring private health insurance. They compared this with their own poll of 30 years ago in which 40 percent wanted government coverage and 48 percent private.

The figures on job creation cited above come from a report called "Single Payer / Medicare for All: An Economic Stimulus Plan for the Nation" prepared by the Institute for Health and Socioeconomic Policy and released by the California Nurses Association. The same report points out that all of the economic benefits of single-payer health coverage would cost far less to create than the Wall Street bailouts. Adding all Americans to an expanded Medicare could be achieved for \$63 billion. Solely expanding Medicare to cover the 47 million uninsured Americans (as of 2006 data on which the study is based) could be accomplished for \$44 billion.

The compromise stimulus bill going to the president left out a provision in the House version that would have enabled states to cover newly unemployed and uninsured people under Medicaid, paid by the federal government. Growing pressure for single-payer could make a compromise that recreates that provision more likely.

Congressman Conyers and Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) both have websites that explain H.R. 676 in great detail. PNHP is part of a coalition working across the country and in Virginia and organizing our event on Monday. The coalition includes numerous labor unions organized as Labor for Single Payer, especially the California Nurses Association, the National Education Association, and the United Steelworkers, Progressive Democrats of America, Healthcare Now, the Leadership Conference for Guaranteed Health Care, the American Medical Student Association, the NAACP, the National Organization for Women, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Board of Church and Society, and many more. This movement can be put to use and we want to work with you.