

## Socialist Party Platform on Healthcare

The Socialist Party stands for a socialized health care system based on universal coverage, salaried doctors and health care workers, and revenues derived from a steeply graduated income tax.

1. We give critical support to the demand for the immediate abolition of all private health insurance companies through the creation of a single-payer health system. We see single-payer as an important step in the direction of a fully socialized national health program with full standard and alternative medical, dental, vision, and mental health coverage for all. This system would be publicly funded through progressive taxation and controlled by democratically elected assemblies of health care workers and patients. The National Health Program should improve, and replace, Medicare and Medicaid.

2. We call for a health care system that emphasizes preventive care, respects patients' privacy, gives special attention to the needs of the physically and mentally disabled, and conducts treatment and research unimpaired by sexism, racism, or homophobia.

3. We call for full funding for AIDS research, prevention, and treatment. We demand full civil rights for people living with AIDS.

4. We call for public ownership and worker and community control of the pharmaceutical industry.

5. We call for educational programs to help prevent drug addiction; for voluntary treatment programs for addicts and alcoholics; and for the availability of free, sterile needles for those still using IV drugs.

6. We call for the reinstatement of funding to community mental health services so that low-cost or no-cost treatment is available on a voluntary basis, with clients' rights respected. We oppose involuntary incarceration for treatment without due process.

7. We support the right to choose or refuse medical treatment, the right to die, and the right to assisted suicide.

8. We call for full community decision-making regarding the creation, organization or elimination of public health care facilities.



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# Vote No on Obama-care! Healthcare is Our Human Right!



While citizens in most other industrialized nations enjoyed the benefits of publicly administered healthcare from the aftermath of WW II forward, Americans have suffered under a healthcare system dominated by private corporations. For-profit healthcare has produced negative health outcomes at all levels of the system. More than 48 million people have no health insurance, 30 million more are underinsured and 6 out of 10 Americans report that they have either delayed or deferred a necessary medical procedure in the last year. Americans are more than ready for publicly-run healthcare that guarantees access at all levels of the system.

Unfortunately, the bill recently passed by the House of Representatives, The Affordable Healthcare for America Act (HR 3962), and the proposals being considered by the Senate will not provide the relief Americans so desperately need. Instead, these reforms were shaped and, in some cases, authored by the very same private interests who have spent decades collecting massive profits by restricting access to care. As a presidential candidate, Barack Obama sensed the growing public anger about healthcare and scored many popularity points for promising “universal healthcare coverage.” Once in office, after taking millions from the healthcare lobby, his rhetoric shifted to the neoliberal promise of “choice and competition” in healthcare.

The primary problem with HR 3962 and the Senate proposals is that all of the changes they propose are made within a for-profit system. The House Bill strips the insurance companies of the right to deny coverage based on a pre-existing condition. Yet, it de-links the public option from Medicare reimbursement rates, thereby surrendering pricing to the private sector.

The Bill removes the anti-trust exemption enjoyed by private insurers. However, it simultaneously mandates that all Americans carry some form of health insurance, thereby herding millions into low-coverage high-fee private plans. Each step in a positive direction is coupled with a restructuring that will enrich private insurance companies and pharmaceutical makers.

The bills lost further reform credentials as Democrats cut last minute deals with Republicans. Immigrants were removed from eligibility for the public option, abortions were written out of the proposal and Medicare funding was cut. The Medicare cuts are particularly cruel, since they will reduce an already compromised plan to bare bones coverage. Some of the cuts will limit private insurance profiteering, but others will slash necessary items such as exercise programs for seniors. Overall, these omissions signal that the reforms are not about providing comprehensive medical coverage, but about political expediency within the establishment political class. The next round of negotiations in the Senate is sure to produce even further regressive measures as campaign-donation driven legislators cut more deals.

What people in this country need is healthcare. It is their right as human beings. The only way to secure this right is to place the healthcare system in public hands—to remove the profit-motive from the system. Single-payer healthcare, as embodied in House Resolution 676, would be a positive step in this direction. It would provide universal access to care to all residents of the United States by abolishing private health insurance companies. In thirteen clearly written pages, HR 676 does the things the 1,990 page HR 3962 does not. Access to care is made universal, a framework is created to make bulk negotiations with hospitals and doctors and

healthcare activists would be freed to set their sights on making the pharmaceutical industry public as well.

The Socialist Party USA therefore encourages its members and supporters to continue their work in the single-payer movement and to pressure elected representatives to vote “No” on the Senate proposal and, eventually, on the merged bill. All non-violent forms of protest should be employed to prevent the passage of this legislation. The protests should clearly oppose the legislation. We do not want a stronger public option, we want what is rightfully ours—unfettered access to healthcare services.

The passage of the weak and contradictory reform bills threaten to disgrace the notion that the public sector should play a prominent role in the administering of healthcare. Resisting the Obama, House and Senate proposals for reform not only promotes the idea that healthcare is a human right, it sends the message that people will not allow private sector campaign contributions to drive politics—the satisfaction of our needs as humans should shape legislation.

Access to healthcare is our human right. We must build a movement to secure this right.

**Say no to HR 3962!**  
**Say no to Obama Care!**  
**Yes to single-payer!**  
**Yes to a socialized medical system!**