



# Missourians for Single Payer Health Care

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## MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

**Julia E. Lamborn-Gettinger**

### GRASSROOTS STRIKE BACK

On Thursday, March 5, 2009, the White House held a summit on how to reform the healthcare system. The 120 invited guests include lobbyists for various interest groups, including the private-for-profit insurance industry (AHIP), some members of Congress including Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus who has already ruled single payer “off the table,” and various others concerned with healthcare.

No single payer advocates had been invited to attend. After a massive email and phone campaign to the White House urging President Obama to fulfill his promise for transparency and openness in government and to let single payer into the White House Summit on healthcare, a last minute invitation was extended to Rep. John Conyers Jr., the chief sponsor of H.R. 676, and president of PNHP, Dr. Oliver Fein. So, a small victory was won and YOU helped win it! That’s the latest news on the national level. For more details go to [www.pnhp.org](http://www.pnhp.org).

**Locally and statewide, MoSP is excited to announce plans for our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Health Care Sunday, April 19 at the St. Louis Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road. Congressman Eric Massa, from New York state will give the 11:00 a.m. address: “Washington’s Hidden Treasure: HR676.” Reception to follow.**

Now is the time for you, our members and friends, to step forward and volunteer to help with activities and to donate money to help fund this event. Congressman Massa’s finances remind me of MoSP’s. This is what was written in an Esquire story in 2008 – published after his victory over the incumbent, well-funded Republican. His money situation was as follows:

“Eric Massa was among the first people in the country to declare candidacy for Congress in 2008. To him, this seemed a wise decision, despite the fact that he had almost no money to his name, no other job, fresh memories of a battle with cancer,



*Dr. Nathaniel Murdock to speak at March 19 MoSP meeting; see details on page 5*

### **MoSP newsletter staff**

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and an uphill struggle in a district that traditionally leans the other way...

“He left his \$125,000 a year job and proceeded to wipe out his savings. He campaigned like a maniac, driving upstate New York’s conservative-leaning 29<sup>th</sup> District in a dilapidated minivan, getting donations of fifty dollars here, a hundred there, and five-dollar pledges from kindly old ladies at the veterans’ hall.”

As we work to educate on single payer, we exist on small membership fees and occasional donations. I now ask YOU to step forward with extra donations so that we may fly Congressman Massa to St. Louis from Corning, New York, provide room and board for him and show him how we value his work for single payer. Your officers volunteer many hours and are rarely reimbursed for expenses. Your help and support and small advances like happened on March 5 spurs us on to do the work of single payer. I truly believe that the tide is turning; we are getting close to critical mass. We must continue our work for non-profit health care for all. With the help of our members and friends we will succeed. Thank you for all you do. Let’s make April 19<sup>th</sup> possible!

## Legislative Report

Rep. Jeanette Mott-Oxford has 22 co-sponsors on her Resolution of Support for HR-676. She filed this bill over the weekend of March 7-8. The bill is HCR38. Those signing on are: Fallert, Nasheed, Atkins, Talboy, Scavuzzo, Frame, Gray, Hoskins, Morris, Curls, Corcoran, Holsman, Schieffer, Hughes, Low, Roorda, Jones (63), Aull, Norr, Vogt, Kirkton, Hodges, and Rucker.

Pres. Hugh McVey will be sending faxes from the State Labor body expressing support for 676.

In the State Senate, Senator Joan Bray has filed Senate Concurrent Resolution No.22, supporting HR676. SCR22 is cosponsored by Senators Days, Wilson, Smith, and Justus.

## Letter to the Editor, St. Louis Post Dispatch

In Saturday’s column, Mr. Krauthammer stated that President Obama’s ultimate goal was single payer, universal health care. I wish he would have explained what he meant by saying the “ultimate result is a system of fully socialized medicine?” People seem to throw out the term “socialized” very loosely and leave the meaning up in the air. My definition would be: a system of healthcare wherein the medical providers are salaried personnel working for the government (like public health agencies), where hospitals are owned by the government and the government decides what type and amount of health care it will provide and where the services will be offered. I realize Mr. Krauthammer has an opinion column, so he is expected to present the conservative viewpoint, but using terms loosely doesn’t clarify any issue. Last week, Rep. Boehner spoke to the health care issue on television and said clearly that all Americans should have “affordable health insurance.” Does he imply that government should subsidize private insurance contracts for the poor and unemployed like it does for the elderly? Are subsidies for insurance companies somehow better than government paying for actual health care? My understanding of a single payer system means privately-owned entities (hospitals and medical practices) bill the payer for services rendered. Medicare is a single payer system. How is that socialized medicine? If conservatives like Mr. Boehner feel strongly that government needs to get out of the business of health care, they should propose an ending date for Medicare. That would start a real dialogue on the issue and we’d see what the American people want.

Klaus Illian  
Manchester, MO

## Missourians for Single Payer (MoSP) Events 2009

### March 19:

MoSP bi-monthly meeting. Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road, Assembly Hall, 6:30 p.m. Program: Dr. Nathaniel Murdock, obstetrician at Barnes and physician at a large city federal clinic, will speak at the March 19 meeting. An outspoken supporter of single payer and former president of the National Medical Association, he will describe roadblocks to care for inner city residents and how they might fare better under single payer.

### April 19:

**MoSP 7th Annual Health Care Sunday. Single Payer Advocate Congressman Eric Massa to Give 2009 Health Care Platform Lecture.** Eric Massa, who chairs the Congressional Caucus for single payer health care, will give the 2009 Health Care Platform Lecture at 11 a.m., Sunday, April 19, at the Ethical Society of St. Louis, 9001 Clayton Road. His talk, "Washington's Hidden Treasure: HR 676" is hosted by Missourians for Single Payer.

### May 21:

MoSP bi-monthly meeting. Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road, Assembly Hall, 6:30 p.m.

### June 19:

Free movie TBA. Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road, Assembly Hall, 7:00 p.m.

### August 21:

Free movie TBA. Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road, Assembly Hall, 7:00 p.m.

### September 17:

MoSP bi-monthly meeting. Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road, Assembly Hall, 6:30 p.m.

### October 16:

Free movie TBA. Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road, Assembly Hall, 7:00 p.m.

### November 19:

MoSP bi-monthly meeting. Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road, Assembly Hall, 6:30 p.m.

### December 3:

MoSP 2009 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting.

## Meeting at Carnahan's

On February 18, 2009, a group of 12 supporters of MoSP met in the St.Louis office of U.S. Representative Russ Carnahan with Suzanne Archer, Deputy District Director, and Mr. Haldemann, a legislative director from Mr. Carnahan's D.C. office. MoSP members asked important questions and pointed out the great need for Universal Health care as advocated in HR676.

Our group stressed to the legislative aide why H.R. 676 is the right answer **now** for our country, especially with millions unemployed. Personal anecdotes and printed facts related that some small businesses today have to decide whether to pay health insurance premiums for employees or pay their salaries. Even though the Democratic Party seems to be supporting a less expensive COBRA insurance coverage for a longer period, we pointed out that the cost will still be highly out of reach for most people without jobs. We asked that Rep.Carnahan be a co-sponsor of H.R. 676 and also finally meet personally with our group. The aide to Mr. Carnahan hinted that the time isn't yet right for such a law, but agreed that he would take a look at the 2009 version of H.R. 676.

Stefany Brot, MoSP Board Member



**Energetic Single Payer Advocate  
Congressman Eric Massa To Give 2009  
Health Care Platform Lecture,  
Sunday April 19**

Eric Massa, who chairs the Congressional Caucus for single payer health care, will give the 2009 Health Care Platform Lecture at 11 a.m., Sunday, April 19, at the Ethical Society of St. Louis, 9001 Clayton Road. His talk, “Washington’s Hidden Treasure: HR 676” is hosted by Missourians for Single Payer.

A Naval Academy graduate, Congressman Massa served as Navy Commander during several global conflicts, including Beirut and Operation Desert Storm. He was Special Assistant to NATO Commander General Wesley Clark, during the Bosnian conflict.

Facing a diagnosis of life-threatening lymphoma, he left NATO to undergo treatment in this country. Against the odds, he survived. In his last year in the Navy, he served as an advocate for cancer victims.

After retiring as Commander, Massa and his wife Beverly bought a home in Corning, New York. He landed a good job in manufacturing only to lose it

when the company outsourced operations abroad. Then he commuted to Washington after taking a staff position with the Congressional Armed Services Committee. He left that job – and the Republican party — over the issue of the Iraq war to work as field manager in New Hampshire during the campaign of his former boss, Wesley Clark’s failed presidential bid. There, he learned grassroots campaigning.

After George W. Bush’s reelection, Massa decided to unseat the incumbent Republican in his upstate New York’s right-leaning 29<sup>th</sup> District. In his first try, he was defeated by only 8,000 votes even though he had no name recognition. “The mayor of Corning didn’t know who I was,” he said. Undaunted, Massa ran again in 2008. Campaigning non-stop on an anti-war and pro-single payer platform, Massa won by 4,000 votes.

His campaign aide in Washington chalked up the Congressman’s success “to his tremendous energy and standing by his high principles.” Earlier this year, Massa was tapped by Congressman John Conyers to head the Democratic Caucus in support of the single payer bill, HR 676. Conyers first introduced the bill in the U.S. House. Massa also was appointed to the Armed Services Committee – this time in a Democratic Congress.

Massa says his extended battle against a deadly cancer – and later as patients’ advocate – opened his eyes to the need for single payer health care. As a Naval Commander undergoing quality health care, he realized that all Americans should have the same level of excellent care, without worrying about the cost.

– Roger Signor, MoSP Program Chair

## Dr. Nathaniel Murdock, Single Payer Advocate, Speaks at MoSP Public Program on Thursday, March 19 at Ethical Society of St. Louis

Dr. Nathaniel Murdock will describe roadblocks to health care in the inner city and in St. Louis County at MoSP's bi-monthly program on Thursday, 6:30 p.m., March 19, at the Ethical Society of St. Louis, 9001 Clayton Road.

A staunch supporter of single payer health care, Dr. Murdock believes a single payer health care system would improve access and quality of care. In his nearly 50 years as an obstetrician/gynecologist, he knows well how the current system often fails patients.

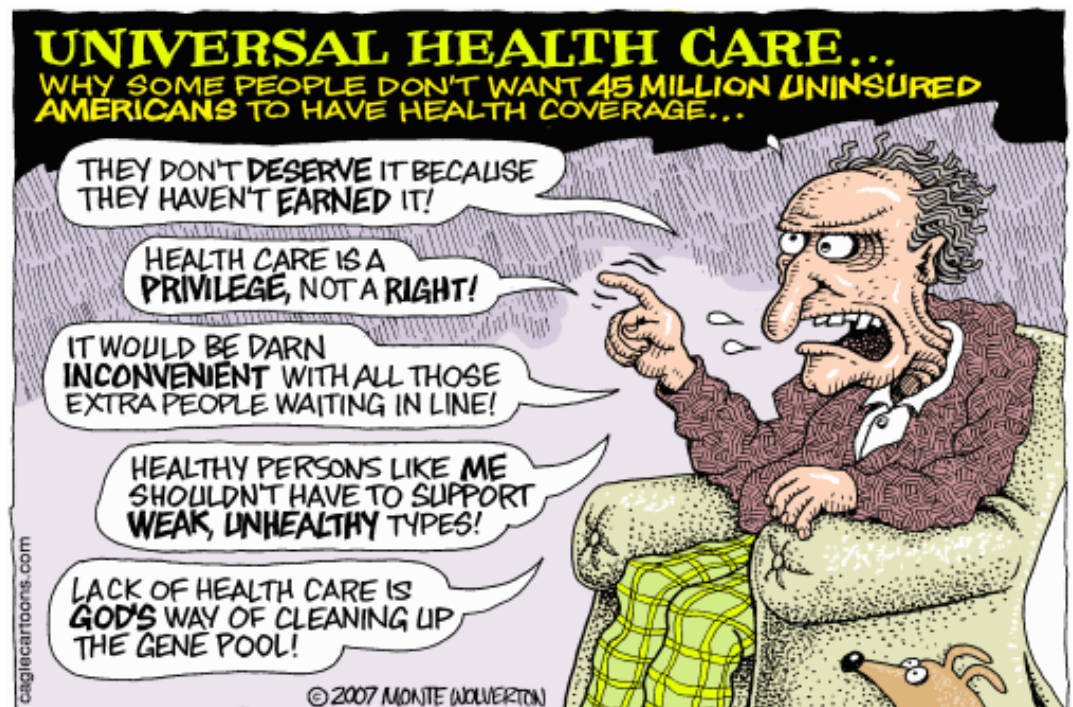
An obstetrician/gynecologist at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and a federally funded clinic on St. Louis's North Side, Dr. Murdock, has delivered about 7,000 babies in his career. Despite such a busy practice, he has served as president of the both the Metropolitan St. Louis Medical Society and the 22,000-member National Medical Association, the nation's largest organization of minority physicians.

He was the second African American to head the St. Louis Medical Society in its 165-year history.

Dr. Murdock has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and an M.D. from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn. He did postdoctoral training at Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis. He underwent further training as a U.S. Air Force Navy Captain before joining the Washington University Medical School faculty in 1969.

Born in Texas, he also has been a volunteer for Planned Parenthood, the St. Louis Metropolitan Golf Club, the Haitian Relief Fund, YMCA and other community groups.

– Roger Signor, MoSP Program Chair



## State of the State Single Payer Bill: Spring, 2009

“The Missouri Universal Health Assurance Act”, SB18 sponsored by Senator Joan Bray, and cosponsored by Senators Rita Days, Yvonne Wilson, Jolie Justus, Tim Green, and Jeff Smith was prefiled on December 1, 2008. MOSP president Julia Lamborn and I visited the Jefferson City offices of our sponsors to personally thank them.

SB18 was heard before the Senate Progress and Development Committee 2/4/09. The committee Chair, Victor Callahan, is the Senate minority leader. Julia and I met with the committee members or their aides prior to the hearing to exchange information and answer questions about the bill. Some committee members had the misconception that SB18 was modeled after the Massachusetts Plan, an insurance industry-controlled program. Senator Bray, the Missouri AFL-CIO, Julia, myself, and Yvette Goode, from the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists testified for SB18.

The Senate Progress and Development committee wrote a Senate Committee Substitute (SCS) for SB18 before passing it out of committee. The SCS for SB18 creates a commission to study ways to implement the program. The SCS expands insurance-based programs that already exist; therefore it is no longer a single payer bill. It increases eligibility for elderly and disabled to qualify for MO HealthNet, formerly MO Medicaid. It eliminates monthly insurance premiums to some families for the CHIP program. It allows small employers to join the Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan.

We have been working with State Representative Michael Brown of Kansas City who has agreed to sponsor the House Bill. The House Bill number is forthcoming this week.

—Mimi Signor, RN

## FAIR Study: Media Blackout on Single-Payer Healthcare

### Proponents of popular policy shut out of debate

Major newspaper, broadcast and cable stories mentioning healthcare reform in the week leading up to President Barack Obama’s March 5 healthcare summit rarely mentioned the idea of a single-payer national health insurance program, according to a new FAIR study. And advocates of such a system—two of whom participated in yesterday’s summit—were almost entirely shut out, FAIR found.

Single-payer—a model in which healthcare delivery would remain largely private, but would be paid for by a single federal health insurance fund (much like Medicare provides for seniors, and comparable to Canada’s current system)—polls well with the public, who preferred it 59-to-32 over a privatized system in a recent survey (**New York Times/CBS**, 1/11-15/09). But a media consumer in the week leading up to the summit was more likely to read about single-payer from the hostile perspective of conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer than see an op-ed by a single-payer advocate in a major U.S. newspaper.

Over the past week, hundreds of stories in major newspapers and on **NBC News, ABC News, CBS News, Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, NPR** and **PBS’s NewsHour With Jim Lehrer** mentioned healthcare reform, according to a search of the Nexis database (2/25/09-3/4/09). Yet all but 18 of these stories made no mention of “single-payer” (or synonyms commonly used by its proponents, such as “Medicare for all,” or the proposed single-payer bill, H.R. 676), and only five included the views of advocates of single-payer—none of which appeared on television.

Of a total of 10 newspaper columns FAIR found that mentioned single-payer, Krauthammer’s syndicated column critical of the concept, published in the **Washington Post** (2/27/09) and reprinted in four

other daily newspapers, accounted for five instances. Only three columns in the study period advocated for a single-payer system (**San Diego Union-Tribune**, 2/26/09; **Boston Globe**, 3/1/09; **St. Petersburg Times**, 3/3/09).

The FAIR study turned up only three mentions of single-payer on the TV outlets surveyed, and two of those references were by TV guests who expressed strong disapproval of it: conservative **New York Times** columnist David Brooks (**NewsHour**, 2/27/09) and Republican congressman Darrell Issa (**MSNBC's Hardball**, 2/26/09).

In many newspapers, the only argument in favor of the policy has been made in letters to the editor (**Oregonian**, 2/28/09; **USA Today**, 2/26/09; **Washington Post**, 3/4/09; **Philadelphia Inquirer**, 2/27/09; **Atlanta Journal Constitution**, 2/26/09).

In contrast, the terminology of choice for detractors of any greater public-sector role in healthcare—such as “socialized medicine” and “government-run” healthcare—turned up seven times on TV, including once on **ABC News's This Week** (3/1/09) and five times on **CNN**. **CNN** senior medical correspondent Elizabeth Cohen has herself adopted this terminology in discussing healthcare reform, stating (**CNN Newsroom**, 2/26/09) that “if in time, Americans start to think what President Obama is proposing is some kind of government-run health system—a la Canada, a la England—he will get resistance in the same way that Hillary Clinton got resistance when she tried to do tried to do this in the '90s.”

Particularly in the absence of actual coverage of single-payer, such rhetoric confuses rather than informs, blurring the differences between the Canadian model of government-administered national health insurance coupled with private healthcare delivery that single-payer proponents advocate, and healthcare systems such as Britain's, in which healthcare (and not just healthcare insurance) is administered by the government.

The views of **CNN's** senior medical correspondent notwithstanding, opinion polling (e.g., **ABC News/Washington Post**, 10/9-19/03) suggests that the public would actually favor single-payer.

Though more than 60 lawmakers have co-sponsored H.R. 676, the single-payer bill in Congress, Obama has not expressed support for single-payer; both the idea and its advocates were marginalized in yesterday's healthcare forum. But given the high level of popular support the policy enjoys, that's all the more reason media should include it in the public debate about the future of healthcare.

*(The above article is a media advisory from FAIR: Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, March 6, 2009 ~ <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=3733> )*

## Comments on a Commentary

Rabbi Susan Talve's commentary, “Building a Movement: Missouri Health Care for All” (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Editorial Section, Feb. 19, 2009) said 10 people in Missouri die each week because they are uninsured. I bet those 10 people didn't die because they weren't insured; I bet they died because they couldn't get health care.

Insurance shouldn't be a prerequisite for health care. Health care is a human right.

Mary Jane Schutzius, Florissant

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\_\_\_\_\_ I'm unable to pay dues at this time, but I will support and promote MoSP among relatives, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, however I can. Please continue to send me the newsletter. Please call on me for volunteer help.