

Leave No One Behind- Single-Payer now!

Single Payer saves money by saying no to the insurance industry and by forcing drug manufacturers and device manufacturers to lower their prices. Again, this is not pie in the sky, this is something that's done in Canada, that's done all over Europe, where the government steps in and uses its bargaining power to get lower prices.

The way single payer works economically is by huge administrative cost savings. The Canadian single-payer system has administrative costs that are just barely half of what administrative costs in the United States are. **The U.S. spends 31 cents on every healthcare dollar on billing and administration,** Canada spends sixteen & half percent. That's a very large difference in terms of administrative spending. Projected to the United States, we could say that a single payer would save over **\$400 billion** a year in administrative costs, and that's the money that you use to pay for expanded care, both for the uninsured and for people who now have only partial coverage.

The problem with the prevalent **"politically feasible"** compromise of incremental steps towards single-payer, is you don't get any administrative savings. If anything, the Obamacare legislation raised overall administrative costs in the United States. **So the beauty of single payer is you get the \$400 billion in administrative savings; it allows you to jumpstart universal coverage without increasing total healthcare costs.** But when you try to do things incrementally, every time you add new coverage, you don't have a way to pay for it, because you have not gotten those administrative savings. Whatever its political possibilities, the incremental approach is not economically possible, whereas a true single-payer system is.

Nearly 2/3's of U.S. health spending is already covered by taxpayers. That figure includes not just Medicare and Medicaid and the VA, things people think of as government health programs, but also; the benefit costs of public employees, like teachers and FBI agents, which of course are paid for by the taxpayers, and the huge tax subsidy to private health insurance. That subsidy



is about **\$326 billion** a year that the taxpayers are picking up for private insurance.

So when you include government direct spending for programs, government spending for public employees' benefits and that tax subsidy, lo and behold, you get to **65% of total health spending already being funded by the taxpayers**, which is about to rise to 67% over the next decade, not that far below the tax-funded share of, for instance, Canada's single payer, where the taxpayers pick up about 71% of total health spending. So the increased taxes that are needed are not that huge. They would all be offset by decreases in premiums and out-of-pocket payments. But even just thinking about the taxes, we're only talking about a share equivalent to about 4% of healthcare budget to get us to the level of taxpayer funding in Canada.

-Dr. Steffie Woolhandler

**Physicians for a National Health Program -
20,000 physicians, medical students and health professionals
who support single-payer national health insurance.
www.pnhp.org**

'G20' Continues from page 1

The current Hamburg incarnation of G20 is very different to the two most significant G20s so far – in 1999, which was an attempt to create global governance after the Asian crisis, and in 2008, in response to the financial crash.

While the "traditional" G20 was unified in either promoting or implementing the so-called Washington Consensus, it seems the new G20 can only agree to disagree.

Perpetual police and ambulance sirens, emergency lights and water cannons accompany the orchestra of power

When it comes to globalization, Angela Merkel continues to push the idea of free trade, while Trump hews to protectionism. At the same time, even China's "panda diplomacy" reveals that those who are supposed to be main allies can't agree on the meaning of globalization in the first place. Or as Merkel put it herself, after the Chinese gave Germany two giant pandas just ahead of the G20 as a token of friendship: "Beijing views Europe as an Asian peninsula. We see it differently."

And then there's the fact that after Trump's withdrawal from the Paris agreement, there is clearly no consensus on how to finally tackle climate change. And even if the rest of the G20



seems in agreement, as nations they still provide four times more public financing for fossil fuels than to renewable energy.

The recent escalation in the Gulf is another source of incongruity. Despite the fact that everyone, from Trump to Theresa May, supports the "fight against terrorism", they continuing to make lucrative arms deals which then subsequently fuel Isis. The Saudis themselves have booked the entire Four Seasons hotel in Hamburg, behaving like kings even in Europe.

Myriad contradictions are evident in Merkel's policies: she prevents Erdoğan giving speeches to

his supporters in Germany, while at the same time is not ready to stop the controversial EU-Turkey refugee deal. Or Germany complaining over Trump's isolationism while it imposes its own EU financial policy without coordination with others.

Unstable quartet of Trump, Putin, Xi and Merkel faces task of tackling crises that couldn't have come at worst time

And here we come back to what is still missing in the German wake-up ad. The problem is not that the leaders of the authoritarian world – Trump, Erdoğan and Putin (plus the Saudis and Chinese) – are asleep:

they know very well what they are doing – and they continue nonetheless.

The real problem is the dogmatic slumber of the leaders of the free world, represented at this G20 summit by Merkel, May and others, which is the origin of our current dystopian nightmare (wars, terrorism, the refugee crisis and climate change). In this sense, the current G20 is not just a demonstration of disagreement on all fronts, but – after Hamburg – whether the G20 can continue to exist at all.

**-Srećko Horvat
diem25.org**

'Big Pharma' continues from page 1

Many of the protesters at the reception voiced support for **Kimberly Ellis**, an organizer backed by Bernie's **Our Revolution** and the **Nurses' Union**. Ellis ran, and lost, against the party's **Eric Bauman**, who came under fire last year when it was revealed that his political consulting firm received more than \$100,000 from the pharmaceutical industry. Ellis' supporters wore bright pink shirts emblazoned with the phrase **"UNBOUGHT UNBOSSSED,"** in a nod to Shirley Chisholm's landmark 1972 presidential campaign.

Meanwhile, the single-payer bill was sailing through the California State Senate and well on its way to being reconciled in the State Assembly, with the strong support of **Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom**, largely considered a shoo-in to succeed 80-year-old Jerry Brown as he retires from his fourth and final term as governor.

Until Speaker Rendon slammed on the brakes, that is, summarily tabling the bill on Friday for at least a full year. Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom and newly-elected state Democratic chair Eric Bauman went ballistic when Rendon issued his ruling, with his decision "roundly denounced" by countless progressive activists as in effect, giving in to Trump

And that's why this move merits national attention. In this kind of environment, whether he meant to or not, the message that Rendon sent was an unmistakable **"ENOUGH ALREADY!"** To put it as bluntly as John Burton might have, Rendon would have had to have been a **"fucking idiot"** to not realize how his move would be interpreted. But like a power-wielding federal judge, Rendon refused to give even an inch of deference.



Rendon himself has been the subject of death threats ever since his decision to overrule the bill. One demented prankster warned Rendon to **"check his schedule for baseball practice."** But a spokesman for the CA Nurses' tossed back,

"There ARE real death threats out there- for people who are facing a loss of health care !"

If you're in the California Assembly bubble, you might be able to get away with saying that Rendon's decision was merely about finding the proper funding mechanisms and procedural issues. If you're anywhere else, it's a metaphor for the struggle that the Democrats are having nationwide, as the neoliberal, "Goldman Sachs" wing of the party that has held absolute economic-sector power at the top since Bill Clinton in 1992, is now fighting an army of Nurses and the forces of Bernie for the future and control of Team D.

A very wise observer from New York, the other large state as irrevocably deep-blue as California, noted that while the Republican Party collapses in New York and California, the intramural battle between corporate Democrats and their opposition is far from over.

California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, can be reached at **916-319 2063**. While we are at it we might also give a ring to our local Assembly member **Jim Woods** who is yet another foot dragger. His number is 445-7014. A "town meeting" style confrontation is definitely in order. **Greenfuse will be there for sure.**

**Thanks to Winona Dimeo-Ediger
inthesetimes.com
& Telly Davidson**