

Labor Campaign for **SINGLE PAYER HEALTHCARE**



**"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

Each year when we prepare to celebrate the birthday of Dr. King, there are always attempts to sugar-coat and appropriate his legacy by those who, in reality, oppose everything that he stood for. This past year saw some particularly outrageous examples as right-wing demagogues like Glenn Beck and Haley Barbour sought to appropriate Dr. King's good name to advance their own divisive, pro-corporate, anti-worker agendas.

Let there be no mistake about it. Martin Luther King Jr. was a fighter against all forms of discrimination and for economic justice. He died supporting striking workers. He would want us to honor him by carrying on his struggle.

Honor Dr. King's Legacy: Fight for Healthcare for All

Activists continue to open up new fronts in the healthcare fight. Despite bleak prospects in the next Congress, several states are poised to pass single-payer reforms that could spark a national response. Vermont may be the first. On January 6, newly elected Vermont Governor Shumlin said in his inaugural address:

"The rising cost of health insurance will cripple us. That's why we must create a single-payer healthcare system that provides universal, affordable health insurance for all Vermonters that brings these skyrocketing costs under control. Let Vermont be the first state in the nation that treats healthcare as a right, not a privilege."

This month, the state legislature will consider the report of a special commission appointed to make recommendations for a new system that would make healthcare a right for all residents of the state. To win, Vermonters will surely have to take on the concentrated power of the entire for-profit health industry. The Vermont Workers Center is a leader in this fight. Find out what you can do to [support them here](#).

Honor Dr. King's Legacy: Support Public Workers

"The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was not assassinated at a rally organized by a right-wing radio talk show host, or at the inauguration of a conservative Republican governor," begins an [extraordinary editorial in the Madison, WI Capitol Times](#). "[He] died while supporting the right of public employees to organize labor unions and to fight for the preservation of public services...The defense of public employees—so essential to a functional society, and yet so frequently abused by the powerful players who would diminish the role of government in order to enhance their own wealth and authority—is as vital a struggle today as it was in 1968."

Today, public employees are being made the scapegoats for a crisis caused by Wall Street greed.

Even Democratic politicians elected with broad labor support are announcing their intent to balance public budgets on the backs of the workers.

Politicians are seeking to cut public workers' hard-won healthcare benefits at a time when they should be joining with these workers to promote Medicare-for-All as a long-term solution to their budget shortfalls. You can find out how to use Healthcare NOW's Win-Win campaign to support public workers [here](#).

Honor Dr. King's Legacy: Stand Up for Free Speech

In light of the recent events in Tucson, it is important that we show that nothing can stop us from asserting our right to freely assemble to petition our representatives. On January 19, the Progressive Democrats of America resume their [Brown Bag Lunch Vigils](#) in front of Congressional offices across the nation.

This month's demands include "Hands off Social Security," "Bring the Troops Home in 2011," and "Move money from the Pentagon to our Communities." You can find an [event in your community here](#).

Honor Dr. King's Legacy: Prepare for Round Two

The recently passed PPACA healthcare legislation is a house of cards. It creates the expectation of the right to healthcare without the ability to actually deliver it. It is financially unsustainable and under political and judicial assault.

A recent [New York Times piece](#) by conservative columnist David Brooks predicts that PPACA will face an "existential threat" within the next five years. Supporters of healthcare reform can either attempt "...to patch the Obama system or try to replace it with something bigger...[B]y a ratio of nearly 2 to 1, according to a CNN poll, Democratic voters would prefer a more ambitious law. Liberals could logically say that the mistake was trying to create a hybrid system, rather than moving straight to a single-payer one."

If we are going to do more than spend the next few years defending the inadequate and unstable PPACA, unions are going to have to rise to fulfill their historic mission to establish healthcare as a right for all in America.

You can help by getting your union and local labor federation to join with the Labor Campaign for Single Payer. Contact us at organizers@laborforsinglepayer.org. Dr. King would have wanted you to.

In Solidarity,

Mark Dudzic
National Coordinator

The Labor Campaign for Single-Payer survives on the generosity of our supporters. **Please consider making a donation.** www.LaborForSinglePayer.org