



the yankee radical

Institute for
Democratic
Socialism

(617) 354-5078

November 2005

Democratic Socialists of America Forum

Which Way for Health Care Reform?

Sponsor: Boston DSA

Co-Sponsors: Mass-Care, Health Care for All,

Health Care Amendment Campaign

When: 7pm, Tuesday, November 22

Where: 565 Boylston St.

A decade after Bill Clinton's health care plan went down to defeat, the issue itself is gaining new urgency. In Washington, Congressional Republicans scheme to cut Medicaid and Medicare. In Detroit, the UAW feels compelled to bargain away hard won health benefits to preserve General Motors from bankruptcy. Here in Massachusetts as well, exploding health insurance costs impacting business, unions, government at all levels, medical providers and consumers have pushed the underlying contradictions of the US health care system to the forefront. And our population of uninsured residents continues to grow (748,000 as of 2004 according to the US Census Bureau).

This has resulted in a flurry of various health care "reform" proposals on Beacon Hill from the Governor, House Speaker and Senate President, among others, which has divided the usual progressive coalition. Some support a bill sponsored by State Senator Tolman and Representative Hynes which, like the Congressional legislation authored by Rep. John Conyers, would replicate a version of the Canadian "single payer" or "Medicare for all" system. Others

back more modest insurance plans and employer-based funding mechanisms. An additional concern of some (like Boston DSA) who might prefer the former is the more substantial political support for the latter.

A wild card, at least for the future, is the recently announced plans of newly merged SEIU 2020 and NY based SEIU 1199 to organize medical workers throughout the state which, if successful, will clearly influence health care legislation. In any case, according to press reports, the legislature will finally begin debating these proposals sometime during November.

Our three speakers are long time advocates of universal health care. **John McDonough** is Director of Health Care for All; before that he was a Dorchester State Rep. (1985-1997) and in the late 1970s chair of Boston DSA. **Barbara Roop** is Co-Chair of the Health Care for Massachusetts Campaign, and has 25 years of experience dealing with economic development and health care policy issues. She served in the Dukakis administration and also in the State Senate as Counsel to the Joint Committee on Commerce and Labor. Community health nurse and clinical educator **Ann Eldridge Malone, RN, MSN** is Director of the Alliance to Defend Health Care, one of almost 90 organizations in MassCare, the coalition working for single payer health care.

After the forum there will be a reception for our speakers.

DSA Members Meeting

Dates: Wednesdays 7 pm,
December 14 & January 11

Place: Harvest Food Co-op
(Community Room); 581 Mass.
Ave., Central Sq., Cambridge

DSA members meetings take place the second Wednesday of the month at the location listed above. Any unforeseen changes will be noted on the DSA answering machine (617-354-5078) in between YRs.

Our November meeting has been cancelled due to the DSA national convention in Los Angeles. The December 14 meeting will report back on the convention and plan future activity. We'll also elect a new executive board to carry us through 2006. (If you'd like more information on what being a board member entails just email or call us and leave your phone number.)

Any DSA member is eligible to run.

SHORT TAKES

By Mike Pattberg

National Wal-Mart Week

Celebrate (anti) Wal-Mart Week November 13-19 with over 400 organizations from across the country who are coming together to take on the retail Goliath over such issues as health care, fair labor practices, and protecting local economies. Unfortunately, as of this writing the events closest to Boston seem to be in New Hampshire, except for a movie screening November 16 in Amherst. For more information visit www.walmartmarch.com.

Elections, Elections...

The Commonwealth Coalition was an alliance of local progressive groups, including DSA, whose Political Committee endorsed candidates in State legislative races. It is now in the process of disbanding and re-forming under another name as yet unchosen. Boston DSA will remain a member. Meanwhile two "special elections" will

be held early next year to fill the vacant House Seats of former Representative (now Senator) Pat Jehlen of Somerville and Michael Coppola of Foxboro. DSAers in these districts who have information or opinions on which candidates DSA and our coalition partners might support can call or email us with your views.

MassCOSH Dinner

The Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), co-founded by DSA member Ed Collins in 1976, brings together trade unionists, environmentalists and community groups to "advocate for safe, secure jobs and healthy communities". Their annual dinner takes place Thursday, December 1, 6-9pm, in their new home at the Vietnamese Community Center, 42 Charles St., Dorchester. Awards, music and Jordan Barab, said to be a "witty political commentator". Call Manuel Mariano, 617-825-7233 x10, www.masscosh.org.

After Capitalism Study Group

We're still looking for participants for our proposed monthly study group on possible alternatives to global capitalism. Email Dave Knuttunen at webmaster@dsaboston.org, or call 617-354-5078 and leave your email address and phone number.

HELP WANTED!

This issue was delayed more than a week because the computer we use to format the YR had a terminal breakdown (along with its owner). Looking for DSA member with relevant skills to format already edited YR under editor's supervision, four hours every other month or so at your home or office. No pay, intangible benefits. Posterity will thank you.

Call (617) 354-5078,
yankeeradical@dsaboston.org

Labor Rally December 8

As part of International Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, the union movement is mobilizing to demand workers are guaranteed a fundamental human right: The freedom to have a union voice on the job. At rallies, town hall meetings, candlelight vigils and teach-ins across the nation, union members and their allies will highlight the obstacles workers face when seeking to join a union at work and showcase strategies for the overcoming those obstacles.

International Human Rights Day commemorates the anniversary of the ratification of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which established the right of people in every nation to come together into unions and bargain contracts.

The U.S. government had recognized those rights 13 years earlier with the National Labor Relations Act. But today, many workers say those rights

exist only on paper. Workers may have the legal right to form unions to negotiate for better benefits, pay and safety standards—but employers across the country routinely block their efforts with threats, coercion and intimidation.

To strengthen protections for workers' freedom to choose a union, the union movement worked with a bipartisan coalition in creating the historic Employee Free Act Introduced into Congress in April 2005, the act (S. 842 and H.R. 1696) would require employers to recognize a union after a majority of workers signs cards authorizing union representation. It also would provide for mediation and arbitration of first-contract disputes and authorize stronger penalties for violation of the law when workers seek to form a union.

In 2003, nearly 38,000 workers, joined by nearly 140 allied group in-

cluding DSA, took part in 97 Dec. 10 actions in 72 cities. This year, U.S. unions and their members will be joined by brothers and sisters of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in such places as Bosnia, Bahrain and Cambodia as workers on six continents take action to support the freedom to form unions.

Here in Boston, according to the AFL-CIO website, we're getting a jump on the rest of the world by observing Human Rights Day on Thursday, December 8, 3:30—5:30pm, beginning with a rally on the Boston Common before marching to the State House. More information call Kathy Casavant, 781-324-8230 or kcasavant@massaflcio.org

Adapted from the AFL-CIO website.

DSA Endorsements

The September members meeting of Boston Democratic Socialists of America voted to endorse two candidates for re-election this November 8: Boston City Councilor At Large Felix Arroyo and Somerville Alderman At Large Denise Provost. Both have been consistent and creative advocates for social and economic justice.

Brought up in a trade union (ILGWU) household in Puerto Rican public housing, Felix Arroyo is the first Latino elected to the Boston City Council. He has been a strong supporter of countless progressive causes, from removing lead from Boston's drinking water, to reforming the unfair CORI system which keeps

ex-felons from securing employment, to picketing with striking N Star workers. He also has thoughtful proposals for alleviating Boston's affordable housing crisis, and to make city planning inclusive and transparent instead of a plaything for developers. His backers range from Senator Kerry, Barney Frank, and the Stonewall Democrats of Massachusetts to ACORN and the Boston Carmen's Union local 589.

In her 6 years on Somerville's Board of Aldermen Denise Provost has been an articulate proponent of so-called "smart growth", in particular her courageous and sometimes lonely opposition to "Big Box" development in Assembly Square. She is a past

board member of the Association for Public Transportation, and is pushing for a Somerville stop on the Green Line. Her supporters include Boston NOW, Progressive Democrats of Somerville and the Sierra Club.

DSAers in Boston and Somerville received a mailing endorsing both these candidates in early October, and have been participating in their campaigns. But if you're reading this before November 8, Denise and Felix can still use your help.

Felix Arroyo: www.felixarroyo.net (617)-323-0408
Denise Provost: www.provost-citywide.org (617)-628-1130.

Contribute to Katrina Relief through the DSA Fund

In response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the DSA Fund has established a special fund to accept tax-deductible donations from DSA members and friends. This fund will be used primarily to provide help to community-based and other social change organizations to recover from the storm and its aftermath. It will bring aid to those who continue to defend the interests of poor and working people in the devastated states along the Gulf Coast. We are currently attempting to assess whether the DSA members

residing there have unmet needs resulting from the storm; this fund will also be used to provide humanitarian aid to such individuals.

The DSA Fund has already designated an initial beneficiary of this fund: ACORN—the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now—saw its national headquarters in New Orleans destroyed. ACORN has a long history of defending the interest of the poor and working people of New Orleans. The group is attempting to re-establish its headquarters in Baton Rouge

so that it will be able to continue to address the needs of the displaced population of the region. Other organizations will be added to the list as they are identified and approved by the Fund. A report on the distributions that are made will be made available to donors and posted on the website.

Checks should be payable to: DSA FUND and indicate that they are for the Katrina Relief Fund. Checks should be mailed to: DSA Fund, 198 Broadway, Suite 700 New York, NY 10038.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

Democratic Socialists of America carries on the struggles and traditions of American democratic socialism, led this past century by Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington. While working for freedom, justice and democracy everywhere, DSA seeks to help build movements to challenge the power of large corporations. The Boston local holds educational forums and study groups, supports progressive political candidates at election time, and participates in labor, civil rights and community struggles. Join us!

Enclosed are membership dues (\$65 sustainer, \$20 limited income).

My address has changed

Please send me more information about DSA.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

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Jehlen Takes Senate Seat

By Harris Gruman

In an intense primary on August 30th, and again in the general on September 27th, Pat Jehlen won back-to-back landslide victories to take the State Senate seat open since Charlie Shannon died this past spring. The Senate district, including most of Somerville, all of Medford and Winchester, and part of Woburn, will now have one of the most progressive legislators in the state representing it in the Senate.

Jehlen proved you can run a principled progressive campaign for the State Legislature and win big, too. “We did something a little risky in this campaign from the beginning,” she told a packed hall of supporters at her victory party on August 30th. “We said we’re going to tell people where we stand.” And her support of expanded spending on health care and education, her defense of equal marriage, and her championing of workers and the poor were announced loud and clear throughout the race.

Her Democratic opponents, conservative House Chair of Taxation Rep. Paul Casey of Winchester, Governor’s

Council member Mike Callahan, and former Somerville State Rep. Joe Mackey were all considered strong candidates. Many pundits, and Somerville Mayor Joe Curtatone, were predicting a race won by less than a couple hundred votes. How, then, did Jehlen come in first with a resounding 2000 vote lead?

Jehlen had the united support of the progressive movement. The Political Committee of the former Commonwealth Coalition, now staffed and housed at Neighbor to Neighbor, came out strongly for Jehlen. Boston DSA, together with other member organizations like Neighbor to Neighbor, MassEquality, the teachers’ unions, SEIU, NOW and NARAL helped her identify the best staff for her campaign, fundraise, recruit volunteers, and send mail to the district.

Together with local forces, like the Progressive Democrats of Somerville, the progressive movement was able to win the race based on intensive shoe leather campaigning. All 45 precincts of this sprawling Senate district were canvassed as

thoroughly as 11-precinct Rep districts had been in recent Coalition supported races. This helped give Jehlen her landslide and continued the progressive drive that elected Carl Sciortino in Somerville/Medford and Ed Augustus in Worcester in 2004 and Linda Dorcena-Forry in Finneran’s former district earlier this year.

Our progressive electoral coalition is combining principles and pragmatism, and especially state-of-the-art campaign management, to transform Massachusetts state politics. It could be a model for the nation!



Former Boston DSA Chair Harris Gruman is Director of Massachusetts Neighbor to Neighbor. The Political Committee is now independent of the Commonwealth Coalition and is searching for a new name.

CLOTHING AND CAPITALISM



American garment worker history, economic analysis of the international clothing industry, and sociology of the global justice movement—Bob Ross has rolled it all into one book: “Slaves to Fashion: Poverty and Abuse in the New Sweatshops.”

That the anti-sweatshop movement’s corporate targets are American is well known – it has confronted stores like Gap, labels like Guess?, and celebrities like Kathie Lee Gifford as publicly as possible with the facts of working life in the mostly third world factories that produce the garments that bear their labels. The book’s estimate that over a quarter of a million of the “new sweatshop” workers are here in the United States may surprise some readers, though. But Ross, a sociology professor at Clark University in Worcester,

Slaves to Fashion: Poverty and Abuse in the New Sweatshops

By Robert J.S. Ross
The University of Michigan Press
Reviewed by Tom Gallagher



longtime activist and DSA member, operates under clear definitions of “sweatshop”; and one that covers more than a third of the American sewing shops is “a place where workers are paid below the local minimum wage.”

The real surprise then, is not that American garment workers don’t make much money—our minimum wage is generally recognized as a poverty wage – but that American labor law enforcement is so ineffectual that even this low standard is so widely violated. But as Ross explains, the replacement of actual labor law enforcement with a system of garment industry corporate self monitoring goes back the Clinton Administration, when congressional passage of funding for an adequate number of inspectors was deemed politically unfeasible and this self

policing approach was considered a viable--- or a least realistic, alternative. Ross reckons this a key factor, along with increased concentration of power within the industry and a corresponding decline in union power, in the return of the sweatshop to America.

If the elimination of sweatshops is your issue, this is your book. And if it’s not your issue, when you learn of Nicaraguan garment workers earning less than 1% of the price of the jeans they sew, and consider that the US buys 30% of the world’s imported clothing and the European Union another 26%, you may decide it should be.

Former Allston-Brighton State Rep and Boston DSA Chair Tom Gallagher currently resides in San Francisco.

Unionists Debate Labor Split



Forum panelists L to R: John Murphy, Ed Collins, Jeff Crosby, Enid Eckstein, and Ana Amaral
(Photo courtesy of Rand Wilson)

On September 8 DSA and Jobs with Justice co-sponsored a forum on the recent split in the AFL-CIO before a Boston audience of about 30 people. Trade unionists from the dissident Change to Win Coalition engaged AFL-CIO loyalists and others in a wide ranging discussion that revealed more agreement about the problems of the labor movement than solutions, but also a desire, where possible, to work together.

Ed Collins (IBEW and DSA) began by making the case against the split, while acknowledging some CTW arguments had merit. Ana Amaral of Jobs with Justice replied that in other places (Brazil, Quebec, France) competing union federations have resulted in

national labor movements stronger than ours.

John Murphy (Teamsters) criticized the AFL-CIO for emphasizing electoral work at the expense of organizing. He also noted that years ago union wages exerted upward pressure on non-union pay rates. Now it's reversed: non-union wages are pushing union wages downward.

Enid Eckstein (SEIU 2020) asserted that, critics to the contrary, SEIU went through extensive democratic debates and membership consultation before deciding to leave the AFL-CIO. She also argued that CIO success in the 1930s was not just due to a new structural model of organizing

(industrial over craft), but also because workers thought they were fighting for some "big idea".

Jeff Crosby (IUE-CWA 201) added that today's big idea could be the anti-corporate globalization movement. Jeff wrapped things up by wishing the labor movement had more occasions (like this one) to explore problems and debate new ideas in an atmosphere of solidarity, instead of "back stabbing or boot licking—which we're quite good at".

- MP



HEARING PUSHES MEDICARE FOR ALL



By *Rand Wilson*

BOSTON - New census data released on August 30 helped galvanize support for a public forum on Sept. 1 where Congressmen John Tierney and Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) heard testimony in support of a "Medicare for All" solution to the health care crisis.

The growing severity of this crisis brought together over 40 grassroots organizations for an impressive—and unusual—showing of political unity for health care reform based on extending Medicare to everyone. In a statement earlier this year at the National Press Club, Senator Edward Kennedy described how it would work:

"I propose we expand Medicare over the next decade to cover every citizen—from birth to the end of life. Its administrative costs are low. Patients' satisfaction is high. Unlike with many private insurers, they can still choose their doctor and their hospital. I call this approach Medicare for All, because it will free all Americans from the fear of crippling medical expenses and enable them to seek the best possible care when illness strikes. It is long past time to extend that success to all."

Reps Frank, McGovern, Olver and Tierney are sponsoring legislation in the House—HR 676—that would implement this approach. More members of the Massachusetts delegation are expected to endorse the bill as it gains support.

The hearing, initiated by Massachusetts Jobs with Justice and co-sponsored by numerous health care, labor and community groups including Boston DSA, was attended by over a hundred people. It featured three panel presentations focusing on cost, access, and quality—the key elements that must all be addressed by any worthy reform proposal.

The new U.S. Census Bureau data shows that in Massachusetts the share of uninsured among people under 65 in 2004 —13.2%—was the highest it has been in seven years. The Massachusetts rate peaked in 1997 at 14.3 percent, declined annually through 2001 when it was estimated at 9.3 percent, then rose in each of the next three years.

According to Barbara Ackermann, the former Mayor of Cambridge who now serves on that city's Joint Board of Hospitals and Public Health, "Underinsurance is also a major problem. Many seniors on Medicare are underinsured and cannot afford essential care as needed."

"A plan like Medicare for All brings 'Everybody In' and leaves 'Nobody Out,'" said Catherine DeLorey, a member of Massachusetts Public Health Association's board of directors. "It creates powerful incentives to strengthen public health programs that will eventually make everyone healthier and save society billions of dollars."

After bruising contract negotiations with her employer Ametek Aerospace over who should pay for escalating health costs, IUE-CWA Local 201 member Carol Cormier said, "It's clear to me and my union that all employers are trying to resolve the health care crisis on the backs of their employees. We need to recognize that this problem can't be solved in negotiations. It's time to work together for real solutions like Medicare for All that can only be achieved in the halls of Congress or our state legislatures."

"The system they've set up for the new Medicare Rx plan brings in unnecessary middlemen," said Ann Stewart, a member of Mass Senior Action Council and participant in the Prescription Advantage program. "The

bureaucracy makes it so complicated that its bound to confuse and frustrate people."

"Over fifteen years of privatization, deregulation, job reengineering, managed care, hospital closures and cuts in essential services has resulted in an industrial model of health care that I call mangled care," said long-time reform advocate Sandy Eaton who works as an RN at Quincy Medical Center. "As a result, no matter what kind of insurance you may or may not have, you take your life in your hands when you get plugged into this dysfunctional system."

Former WBZ TV 4 news reporter Sarah-Ann Shaw, a civil rights organizer and human services advocate, moderated the forum.

"Skyrocketing costs, deteriorating quality of care, loss of insurance coverage and access to essential services is affecting everyone's health care," said Rep. Tierney. "Common sense solutions like extending Medicare to cover everyone can save money while improving quality and access to health care for all."

"When we started organizing the hearing, only one member of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation had signed on. Now we have four out of the ten," said Paul Cannon, President of Teamsters Local 122 and co-chair of Jobs with Justice's Health Care Action Committee. "We've got our work cut out for us. It's time to step-up the pressure on our policymakers for comprehensive reforms that cover everyone."

Rand Wilson is now working for IUE-CWA 201.

Health Care: Showdown at the State House

The July DSA members meeting voted to back all three of the health care proposals debated below: the “single payer” legislation proposed by Senator Tolman and Representative Hynes, the campaign for a state constitutional amendment guaranteeing health care coverage, and also Senator Moore’s Mass ACT bill. This last has provoked some dissent. The YR welcomes the responses of members and friends, however critical, but one apparent misunderstanding should be clarified. Sandy Eaton comments that some in DSA feel that Mass Care, in “vigorously supporting” the single payer bill, is splitting the movement for health care reform. Actually, as a charter member of the Mass Care coalition, we certainly have no objection to its support of legislation we also favor. But does wanting the best solution always mean opposition to more modest efforts that have a chance of winning?

Really Support Universal Health Care

By Judy Deutsch

It is great that the July meeting of DSA voted to endorse the Health Care for Massachusetts Campaign’s efforts to pass a constitutional amendment mandating affordable health coverage for every State resident and to support S755, “An Act to Establish the Massachusetts Health Care Trust” which will provide quality health care for all for less money than Massachusetts is currently spending for some.

But it is appalling that the same meeting voted to also support the Mass-ACT bill. The September 2005 issue of *The Yankee Radical* states that said bill “does seem to provide some immediate relief.” I did not expect this of DSA.

Don’t you know that the history of such band-aid approaches shows that fewer and fewer Massachusetts residents get covered? Don’t you know that the recently released U.S. Census Bureau data reveals that the percentage of Massachusetts people without health insurance has risen? Don’t you know it is a given that health care systems relying on the insurance industry are going to cost so much that they can never afford to cover everyone with quality health care? And don’t you know that if those of us who want single-payer universal health care don’t work for it unequivocally, we’ll never get it?

So beware of probable consequences before you help collect signatures to put “The Massachusetts Quality Affordable Health Care Act” on the ballot.

Ann Eldridge, one of the leaders in the Health Care for Massachusetts campaign for a universal health care constitutional amendment, cites this

parable that she learned in community health nursing: “There was a village next to a river. Many people were seen floating by and then drowning in the river. Some in the village said, ‘Let’s go upstream to discover and fix whatever is causing people to fall in that river and drown.’ But others said, ‘No, that’s too risky. Maybe we will get hurt too. Let’s do what is safe and will help people now.’ The second group won out, set up a brigade which could safely pull as many people as they were able to out of the river. But their efforts could not keep up with whatever was the cause, and so, many people continued to drown.”

She adds, “The powerful and well-connected opponents of single-payer universal health care are delighted to see health-access proponents and others working on the inadequate Mass-ACT campaign. If progressives are busy with ACT, it will pretty much guarantee that they will not build up the courage and political power to go ‘upstream,’ identify and overcome the root causes of our healthcare system disaster, and enact single-payer universal coverage for all.”

Stated as one of the purposes of the Massachusetts Quality Affordable Health Care Act (the Mass-ACT bill) is the intent to “increase access by residents of the Commonwealth to affordable, quality health insurance coverage provided by government and private employers.”

Please note that it says “increase access” not guarantee access to all. And, like so many other earlier attempts at band-aid “solutions,” its inherent costs will make it impossible for universal access to be achieved. The plan which this petition aims to have implemented has large administrative expenses due to its use of means testing for eligibility and its reliance upon the insurance industry

with their excessive high salary-packages for CEO’s and huge administrative costs arising from multiple forms and standards. Co-pays and deductibles will make many patients unable to obtain needed medical care, and their choice of health care providers will remain limited by the insurance plans and the patient’s income. Furthermore, many people will not be covered for health insurance when they are between jobs.

As Peggy O’Malley, a long time advocate for single-payer health care has recently written, “...we cannot achieve fully any of the three necessary components of a true ‘system’ of health care (access, quality, and affordability) without committing to all three simultaneously. Achieving truly universal coverage for good quality care will be unaffordable unless we’re willing to ‘harvest’ the funds now wasted on multiple private payers, each with multiple plans, each rewarding the CEO’s (and multiple layers of other high-paid executives, lawyers, accountants) with high salaries”

To say, as many supporters of this petition do, “Of course, we want universal coverage, and we know that single-payer (as provided in S755, An Act to Establish the Mass Health Care Trust) would achieve it, but the insurance companies will never let a single-payer plan pass” is to continue to kowtow to the health insurance industry at the expense of Massachusetts residents. Is that what you want to do?

If not, refuse to sign this petition yourself and refuse to work to get others to do so. Instead work for the constitutional amendment for universal health care and for S.755. We will be glad to supply details about how you can do so.

IF EVERYONE (INCLUDING EVERY LEGISLATOR) WHO THOUGHT THAT A SINGLE-UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE PLAN WAS THE BEST WAY TO GO WOULD WORK FOR IT NOW, WE WOULD GET IT!

Judy Deutsch is active with both DSA and Mass Care

Contradictions in the Massachusetts Health Reform Movement

By Sandy Eaton

I've been asked to comment on concerns raised by some, even within DSA, that MASS-CARE, in vigorously supporting S.755, An Act to Establish the Massachusetts Health Care Trust, is somehow splitting the movement for fundamental healthcare reform in Massachusetts. This is a serious issue, especially for those of us dismayed by splits in the labor and peace movements, among others.

In the early nineties in Greater Boston, the Health Reform Task Force of Jobs with Justice provided the framework for unity in action of those forces working for single-payer universal health care on the state and national levels. One day in 1991, for instance, we targeted the John Hancock Tower and all it symbolized, stringing red ribbon all around it to display the endless red tape associated with commercial health insurance. A number of labor, civic and community organizations worked together.

Then along came Bill Clinton, the most effective Republican president of the Twentieth Century, pushing managed competition. It didn't matter that his boondoggle to the largest insurance companies failed to pass, since corporate America got the hint, and managed care caught on as the preferred vehicle for containing the corporations' rising healthcare costs.

The first split came in that fateful 1993 fall board meeting of Health Care For All, where all but Massachusetts Senior Action Council president Manny Weiner voted to put the fight for single payer on the back burner and support the

Clinton fiasco. Others followed suit, and the coalition was split.

Broad unity began to be established again with the 1994 campaign to place local non-binding questions on a number of ballots across the Commonwealth instructing legislators to support single payer. Neighbor to Neighbor played a key role in this endeavor. It was on this occasion that the Massachusetts Nurses Association shook off the Clinton trance and voted in convention to support these ballot questions and, hence, single payer.

The Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Health Care (MASS-CARE) took shape in 1995, spun off from Jobs with Justice, uniting most of the groups who had worked on the ballot questions, and grew to incorporate ninety organizations, local and statewide, who embraced the vision of "everybody in, nobody out."

As privatization, deregulation, job reengineering, merger mania, for-profit incursions and managed care radically altered the health care scene throughout the nineties, nurses, physicians and others in health care rebelled, forming the Statewide Campaign for Safe Care in 1994 and the Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Health Care in 1997. This rebellion led to Question 5 on the 2000 state ballot and two militant strikes by RNs in 2000 and 2001.

Question 5 sought to enact a bill of rights for patients and providers, universal health care by July 1, 2002, and a moratorium on for-profit conversions of healthcare facilities until the system of universal health care was in place. Question 5 deliberately refrained from identifying any specific vehicle for getting to universal health care, leaving that for the legislature to hammer out. Eight organizations formed the campaign committee: the Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Health Care, the League of Women Voters, the Consortium for Psychotherapy, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Service Employees International Union, the Massachusetts Senior Action Council, Health Care For All and the Massachusetts Nurses Association.

The healthcare establishment went berserk, and corporate Massachusetts eventually ponied up \$5m to defeat this

question. The legislature was under extreme pressure to bring down Question 5. Late in the afternoon of July 6, 2000, Paul Haley, House chair of Ways and Means, came into the office of Mark Montigny, Senate chair of Ways and Means, to work out the parameters of a deal, witnessed by representatives of Health Care For All, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, SEIU and MNA. Chapter 141 was hatched, which would include the bill of rights that the legislature had been stalling on for five years and the promise of a further study on how to achieve "consolidated healthcare financing and streamlined delivery."

This latter point was to get buy-in from the single-payer activists. The promise in this meeting was that this study would be complete and published in time to inform the 2002 elections. This LECG report, named after its lead consultant, was not published until late December 2002. Several analyses revealed that it grossly overestimated the transition costs to a single-payer system for Massachusetts, and grossly underestimated the cost savings of such a system.

So the legislature, at the behest of the industry, managed to split the coalition, with the Ad Hoc Committee to Defend Health Care, the Massachusetts Nurses Association, the Consortium for Psychotherapy and the League of Women Voters staying on track, picking up additional support from groups like the Springfield NAACP and SEIU Local 509. Among the groups that split, HCFA was happy to have at long last a bill of rights. Rich Marlin, legislative agent for the AFL-CIO, had the integrity at least to reveal that there was not sufficient money both to pass Question 5 and to defeat the major tax rollback question on the same ballot. Question 5, outspent fifty-to-one, nearly passed with a vote of 48%-52%, doing far better than the campaign to stop the tax rollback.

Because of its single-issue, coalition character, MASS-CARE was not able to endorse Question 5. For the same reason, it cannot endorse the current campaign to amend the Massachusetts constitution to make access to affordable health care a right of all who reside here. Many of the organizations that comprise the MASS-

CARE coalition, however, and many of their individual members, vigorously support this initiative. MASS-CARE participates in the work of the reborn Jobs with Justice Health Care Action Committee, and worked hard to promote the Congressional hearing in Faneuil Hall on September 1st in support of HR.676, the Conyers Medicare for All bill.

Many feel that the drive to amend the constitution is so widely supported as to be unstoppable. So politicians of every stripe are compelled to offer or support some bill which purports to meet the expectations of the people for real reform. Hence, the Moore, Travaglini and Romney bills.

Some accuse MASS-CARE of being obstructionist for not supporting the Moore bill, with its continued reliance on the peculiar institution of employment-connected insurance and a panoply of commercial insurers, and its consequent inability to offer coverage to everyone. A key feature of the Moore bill is the increase in Medicaid payments to providers. Alan Sager, addressing the Caucus of Women Legislators on September 21st, points out that "... about one-half of the increase in Medicaid payments would apparently go to the 20 most prosperous hospitals in the state - most of them large and powerful teaching hospitals. It would do little to stabilize needed, efficient, but endangered community hospitals. Then, when these other hospitals ask for money to help themselves survive, they'd be told that it's all spent. Half of our state's hospitals have been closed since 1960—all of them non-teaching community hospitals. Many of the survivors are endangered. And Massachusetts is tops in the nation in the share of patients served in costly teaching hospitals." So the very institutions that contributed so much to the decline in the quality of care over the past fifteen years, through their insistence on deregulation, the importation of consultants and the blocking of vital patient safety legislation, are pushing the Moore bill, while complaints about patient safety rose 76% over the last seven years. Let their CEOs contribute their bloated salaries to rectifying their historic mistakes. Let them then join forces with us in creating a just healthcare system.

Sandy Eaton, RN, is Chair of the Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Health Care (MASS-CARE) and a member of the Committees of Correspondents for Democracy and Socialism

The Mass ACT Campaign

By: John McDonough

More than 532,000 Massachusetts residents have no health insurance. During the past five years, health insurance premiums have been rising at double digit rates. Private employers and local governments face growing difficulties paying for health insurance for their workers. Hospitals, health centers, physicians and other providers receive low reimbursement from the state, shifting costs to private insurance premiums.

The MassACT! Ballot Initiative Campaign (www.massact.org) aims to put health reform before Massachusetts voters on the 2006 ballot. We are mobilizing a statewide network of individuals who support comprehensive health reform to collect at least 100,000 signatures from voters to meet the first requirement for inclusion on the ballot. This ballot initiative process will show legislators that Massachusetts residents want affordable access to health care. The ballot language provides for:

- * Affordable quality coverage by providing sliding-scale assistance to moderate income families struggling to afford health care costs.
- * Small business assistance by expanding the Insurance Partnership program which helps small firms provide quality health benefits to their workers and through a reinsurance program to reduce premiums.
- * Expanded coverage through MassHealth for low income children and families, including the restoration of coverage of eyeglasses, dentures, dental care, benefits for legal immigrants, and the addition of smoking cessation programs.

- * Reduced premiums by eliminating insurance assessments paid by companies who cover their workers.
- * Lower health costs by increasing the cigarette tax by 60 cents to reduce smoking and to fund affordable coverage.
- * Fair funding though affordable assessments on businesses that can afford to provide health coverage to their employees but do not.

The MassACT! Ballot Initiative Committee includes the following organizations:

- * Coalition for Social Justice
- * Greater Boston Interfaith Organ.
- * Families USA
- * Health Care for All
- * Massachusetts Business Leaders for Quality Affordable Health Care
- * Neighbor to Neighbor
- * SEIU 615
- * SEIU 2020
- * United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1445
- * Massachusetts Building Trades Council

The initiative campaign is proceeding as legislative leaders consider their own proposals for health reform. Governor Romney, Senate President Travaglini, and the HCFA-led Affordable Care Today (ACT!) Coalition all have legislation under consideration. The MassACT ballot initiative can help move the legislative agenda further than it otherwise would go, and it provides an opportunity for voters to weigh in on this issue if the legislature fails to act or falls short in their efforts. Some complain that our initiative falls short because it is not a single payer, taxpayer financed plan. Health Care For All supports single payer proposals. But single payer plans have been filed in the legislature in every session since 1986 and have never received sufficient support to win approval even at the committee level. The needs of uninsured and underinsured residents are too great to allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. The MassACT initiative would expand coverage to nearly all low and moderate income uninsured in Massachusetts, and provide more affordable coverage than any other state in the nation. We know from past experience that

successful efforts in Massachusetts can have positive ripple effects across the nation—even at points in time when reform seems futile.

Please contact Lisa Vinikoor at (617) 275-2807 or vinikoor@massact.org for more information about the campaign and to learn how to become a volunteer.

Former Dorchester State Rep and Boston DSA Chair John McDonough is Director of Health Care for All

The Health Care Constitutional Amendment

By Michael B. Carr, Campaign Manager

Health care reform is a moral and an economic imperative. We must take action to end a system that excludes over 740,000 Massachusetts residents, threatening their health and financial well-being and the competitiveness of the entire State economy.

The Health Care Amendment Campaign is a citizen-led initiative to ensure every Massachusetts resident access to affordable, comprehensive coverage for medically necessary health and mental health care services. It requires the Legislature and the Governor to enact laws to accomplish this goal and gives the voters final approval over any

plan they develop to meet all the Amendment's standards.

It reframes the health access debate. The basic questions will be answered. Who deserves coverage? Every resident. What is covered? Medically necessary preventive, acute and chronic health and mental health care, prescription drugs and devices. The only question left is "how". The Health Care Amendment intentionally does not provide an answer but finding one won't require reinventing the wheel. There is no shortage of good reform ideas or of experts to craft the solution.

Recent history provides a clear lesson. Legislation, by itself, is not enough to fix our health care problem and keep it fixed. Over and over major legislative expansions have been followed by repeals and funding cuts. The Health Care Amendment will end this cycle as only a constitutional mandate can. After ratification it will provide constant pressure to expand access, improve quality and eliminate waste until every resident can afford the care they need.

The Health Care Amendment builds on a solid consensus. Almost 83% of Massachusetts voters agree that every resident deserves the same high quality health care regardless of their ability to pay. How to do it will be the subject of much debate, as it should be. But over 75% of Massachusetts voters support the

Health Care Amendment as a statement of principle that should be part of our social contract with each other. It is a powerful weapon in the fight against discrimination. It is a powerful catalyst for fundamental reforms that will eliminate the barriers to getting the care we need when we need it so many of us face.

The Health Care Amendment sets a clear goal—0% uninsured in Massachusetts. It creates a legally enforceable duty to meet clear standards—affordable, comprehensive, equitably financed coverage for all. Will it solve every problem overnight? Probably not. But it provides a solid legal and political foundation for lasting legislative reforms designed by stakeholders and advocates and approved by the voters.

Massachusetts is half way to becoming the first state in the nation to create a constitutional right to affordable health care. Join us. Help make history.

Martin Luther King once said, "Of all forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." The Health Care Amendment will be a huge step toward ending this injustice—once and for ALL.

For more information on the Campaign please call (617) 868-1280 or visit www.HealthCareForMass.org

Michael Carr is campaign manager for the Health Care Amendment Campaign.

A Democratic Socialist Perspective for the Anti-War Movement

The following resolution was passed in September by the national political committee of DSA.

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is proud to be part of the movement against the war in Iraq, and stands with those calling for an immediate end to the U.S. occupation. An ever increasing number of Americans are coming to our view that the United States military plays no genuinely democratic or progressive role in Iraq and that U.S. troops must be brought home now. A stable civil society in Iraq cannot be instituted under U.S. auspices and certainly not through U.S. force of arms. All U.S. military bases must be dismantled, all

intelligence agents and civilian occupation personnel repatriated, all "free-market" economic decrees annulled, and all sweetheart contracts and appointees made revocable and removable at the democratic discretion of the Iraqi people. The Bush regime must also accept the bloody consequences of its march to empire by committing preparations to fund Iraq's reconstruction. The anti-war movement organizes under the slogan "Out Now—Bring the Troops Home." It is the only politically effective and morally appropriate stance to take. Not only

does the U.S. have no right to occupy Iraq, it has no overarching good reason to be there. From the standpoint of "spreading democracy"—the Bush regime's latest excuse for causing the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqis and nearly 2,000 Americans—that effort is backfiring. There are strong and growing indications that the majority of Iraqis oppose the U.S. presence and that continuing the occupation will lead to the strengthening of reactionary forces. Only an end to the occupation can undermine

(Continued on page 11)

(*Resolution Cont.*)

support for the violent insurgency and create the political space that could allow Iraqi democratic, secularist and trade union movements—the forces DSA supports—to grow. Calling for immediate withdrawal is also the only realistic lever the U.S. peace movement has in moving the Bush regime to even accept a phased withdrawal under international auspices, which those leery of a quick exit say they prefer. But our opposition to the U.S. occupation of Iraq does not mean that we support the Iraqi armed resistance. While some participants in the insurgency are Iraqis legitimately angered by the brutality of the U.S. occupation and its affront to national dignity, the dominant political tendencies in the armed resistance are profoundly reactionary. The Ba’athist faction seeks to regain state power in the name of the Sunni minority, and is murdering its way through Baghdad. The political-Islamist wing—calling itself “Al Qaeda in Iraq”—seeks to establish a theocratic totalitarian state where, in its own words, “we will fight a bitter war against democracy and all those who seek to practice it.” These currents have tortured and murdered trade unionists and election workers. They do not represent a national liberation movement for Iraqi self-determination, and genuine democrats cannot stand in solidarity with them.

We believe that the whole of the anti-war movement must realize this and make it clear to all, lest we appear to ordinary Americans as apologists for cold-blooded killers, and hence no better than the Bush regime. Moreover, the anti-

war movement must follow the lead of U.S. Labor Against the War and act in solidarity with the Iraqi trade union movement. We applaud USLAW’s organization of the historic 25-city U.S. tour by leaders of the three Iraqi labor organizations—the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq, and the General Union of Oil Employees. We join in these leaders’ condemnation of terrorist attacks on civilians and targeting of trade union and other civil society leaders for intimidation, kidnapping, torture and assassination. The entire anti-war movement must do the same. Even if some other Iraqi unions refuse to get behind the demand of “Out Now,” and even if they make what we consider political errors in thinking they can buy time to build industrial democracy on the point of an American bayonet, we support their right to exist and the struggle of Iraqi workers against both the occupation and the anti-labor “resistance.” To denounce such unions as “quislings,” or a “Trojan Horse in the Antiwar Movement,” as a few U.S. radicals have done, is mindless cheerleading for some of the most reactionary forces in Iraqi society. It portrays the struggle in Iraq through an exclusively populist-nationalist framework rather than one shaped by social class. We want to empower Iraqi workers, not force them to live under a jihadist boot. That means supporting Iraqi workers’ right to organize trade unions of their own choosing and their struggle against both the occupation and the anti-labor “resistance.”

With sufficient international labor movement support—and the support of the anti-war movement—Iraq’s new labor movement will be better able to win battles for political and civil rights and liberties. It—along with the forces for democratic secularism and those religious leaders who recognize that the Iraqi state must not be theocratic—is the main hope for a democratic civil society in Iraq. It will be in a position to win over the angry, bewildered youth whom the political Islamists are currently recruiting. As USLAW has put it, “The role of U.S. and international trade unionists is to oppose the occupation while supporting all forces genuinely representing workers and fighting to assure that Iraq implements full internationally recognized trade union rights. The workers of Iraq will decide who they want to represent them as this process unfolds.”

DSA also urges anti-war and labor-movement support for the Organization for Women’s Freedom in Iraq and other organizations campaigning against Islamist attempts to subject women to Shari’a law. The continuing occupation of Iraq, combined with the Bush regime’s failure to secure the Gulf Coast against the threat of natural disasters, reveals a government whose priorities are skewed toward empire building, privatization and the narrow interests of corporate profiteers. Instead of conducting a brutal war in Iraq and leaving low-income communities at sea, we need a government committed to rebuilding communities at home and abroad.

A NEW COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY: FEMINISM

By *Barbara Ehrenreich*

I’ve been reading Bin Ladin—Carmen, that is, not her brother-in-law Osama (she spells the last name with an “i”)—and I’d like to present a brand-new approach to terrorism, one that turns out to be more consistent with traditional American values. First, let’s stop calling the enemy “terrorism”, which is like saying we’re fighting “bombings”. Terrorism is only a method; the enemy is an extremist Islamic insurgency whose appeal lies in

its claim to represent the Muslim masses against a bullying superpower.

But as Carmen Bin Ladin urgently reminds us in her book *Inside the Kingdom*, one glaring moral flaw of this insurgency, quite apart from its methods, is that it aims to push one-half of those masses down to a status only slightly above that of domestic animals. While Osama was getting pumped up for a jihad, Carmen was getting up her nerve to

walk across the street in a residential neighborhood in Jeddah—fully veiled but unescorted by a male, something that is an illegal act for a woman in Saudi Arabia. Eventually she left the kingdom and got a divorce because she didn’t want her daughters to grow up in a place where women are kept “locked in and breeding”.

So here in one word is my new

(*Continued on p. 12*)

(Ehrenreich Cont.)

counterterrorism strategy: feminism. Or, if that's too incendiary, try the phrase "human rights for women"...

We should announce plans to pour US tax dollars into girls' education in places like Pakistan, where the high-end estimate for female literacy is 26 percent, and into scholarships for women seeking higher education in nations that typically discourage it. (Secular education for the boys wouldn't hurt, either.) Expand the grounds for asylum to all women fleeing gender totalitarianism, wherever it springs up. Reverse the Bush policies on global family planning, which condemn

seventy-eight thousand women to death each year in makeshift abortions. Lead the global battle against the trafficking of women...

If this country were to embrace a feminist strategy against the insurgency, we'd have to start by addressing our own dismal record on women's rights. We'd be pushing for the immediate ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has been ratified by 169 countries but remains stalled in the US Senate. We'd be threatening to break off relations with Saudi Arabia until it acknowledged the humanity of women.

And we'd be thundering about the shortage of women in the US Senate and House, an internationally embarrassing 14 percent. We should be aiming for a representation of at least 25 percent, the same target the Transitional Administrative Law of Iraq has set for the federal assembly there. If we want to beat Osama, we've got to start listening to Carmen.

Barbara Ehrenreich is one of DSA's 8 Honorary Chairs. This piece was excerpted from Stop the Next War Now, edited by Medea Benjamin and Jodie Evans

Boston DSA Calendar

Tuesday, November 22

Health Care Forum (see page 1)

Thursday, December 8

Human Rights Day Rally (see page 2)

Wednesday, December 14

DSA Members Meeting (see page 1)

Health Care Forum	page 1
DSA Members Meeting	page 1
Human Rights Day	page 2
Arroyo, Provost	page 3
Jehlen Landslide	page 4
Slaves to Fashion	page 4
Labor Forum	page 5
Medicare for All	page 6
Health Care Debate	page 7
IRAQ Resolution	page 10
Carmen Bin Ladin	page 11

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