



February 22, 2013

To: LWVC Single Payer activists
From: Helen Hutchison, LWVC VP for Advocacy and Program

For the first time in ten years, there will not be a single payer bill before the legislature in California this session. Since Senator Leno announced to the leaders of the statewide coalition last summer that he would not carry SB 810 again, we have been meeting with legislator after legislator in an attempt to persuade one of them to carry our bill.

Implementing the ACA

Our state legislators are working at full tilt to make California one of the first states in the nation to implement the Affordable Care Act. The federal government is providing over \$650 million to California for this effort and The California Endowment is contributing another \$350 million.

Local Leagues across the state are holding meetings on the ACA, and helping with community education about the ACA.

"Wait and See"

Legislators have told us we need to "wait and see" if the ACA lives up to its stated intentions. We wholeheartedly support expanding coverage to more Californians, but also recognize that the ACA is not perfect. Without waiting, we already know that:

- It will still leave some three million Californians without any insurance.
- It will leave private insurance companies in the system. We know that insurance company overhead is significantly higher than single payer systems such as Medicare or the Veterans Administration.
- It will not control skyrocketing insurance premiums.
- People will continue to die simply from lack of insurance.

Where do we go from here?

The ACA holds the limelight for now; the movement for single payer must continue in order to achieve a system that provides for all Californians.

Our Message

The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land, and provides help for some Californians. Californians must continue to push for continued reform, "ACA 2.0" if you will, in the form of single payer. The ACA itself allows states to move to single payer systems in 2017. We need to start preparing for that transition now.

Our Plan

No matter what route single payer takes, legislation or ballot initiative, we must get our message out to the broader public. Our coalition will redouble our efforts in these key areas:

- Education, outreach and district organizing
- Building coalitions with our allies in labor unions, the Latino and other communities.
- Expanding our partnerships with others working on progressive causes
- Building our grassroots base

The League's Role

The League should be a voice of reason, practicality and calm within the single payer movement. We are committed to this issue for the long term and need to help the coalition take the long view. If the bill is not going to be moved this year or even next year, we still have important work to do. We have the public and newcomers to the Legislature to educate. We need to work with our coalition to raise the money, get the grants to complete the studies compiling the data on costs, coverage, access and the implications for our society of the current system and the ACA as it is implemented.

For League members, there will be a workshop on health care at the LWVC convention in San Jose May 17-19. If you want to help plan this, contact Li-hsia Wang, lihsiawang@pacbell.net.

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