



# DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

## Senate Bill Must be Fixed in Conference Committee

**Democratic Socialists of America NPC Resolution on the Senate Health Care Bill  
In favor of progressive mobilization for a decent Conference Committee report**

**December 20, 2009**

Democratic Socialists of America shares the progressive community's outrage at the version of the health care reform bill that appears to be emerging from the Senate. While the Senate bill would expand coverage to 31 million Americans and would eliminate "pre-existing conditions" as a barrier to insurance, the Senate bill, as is, represents a massive public subsidy to a private insurance industry which retains as much as 40 per cent of its premiums for administration, executive salaries, marketing, and profits. The Senate bill contains no public option (immediate or triggered), no Medicare buy-in for those under 65, no competition for for-profit plans, no meaningful cost-containment and no prohibition against insurance companies colluding on premiums and terms of coverage.

The Obama administration's failure to fight aggressively for the barebones progressive provisions mentioned above means that the insurance industry is now calling the shots, aided and abetted by pro-corporate conservative Democratic Senators and the opportunistic shill for the insurance industry, Sen. Joe Lieberman.

DSA urges the progressive community to mobilize over the next month to insure that the bill that emerges from the conference committee includes a strong public option, an expansion of Medicare, progressive financing of public health care subsidies, and restrictions that would force private insurers to spend a minimum of 85 per cent of their premiums on actual health care provision.

DSA recognizes that only massive lobbying and mobilization by community groups, trade unions, seniors and the uninsured can lead to passage of a bill that is not a huge public subsidy to unregulated private insurance companies. Efforts to pass a decent reform package out of the conference committee process would be greatly aided by a president and Senate Democratic leadership that took on the private insurance, hospital and pharmaceutical industry rather than caving to these interests in advance and without a fight. The undemocratic nature of the Senate should not allow conservative Democratic Senators from sparsely populated states to hold progressive health reform hostage. If the only way that decent health care reform can pass the Senate is through a strict majority "reconciliation bill" so be it, as there is nothing democratic about requiring sixty votes to break a filibuster.

If decent health care reform is to pass the Congress, President Obama and the Senate Democratic leadership must speak for the public interest instead of being toadies for the private insurers and the "moderate" Democrats they so generously fund.