

Candidate for North Carolina House Commits to Introducing State Single-Payer Healthcare

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A bill to create single-payer healthcare in California has passed that state's senate for the third time now. Californians just need to persuade a governor to sign it. Single-payer healthcare bills are advancing in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and a growing list of states, including New Mexico, where State Senator Jerry Ortiz y Pino, a long-time supporter of single-payer healthcare, is running for Lieutenant Governor.

Now North Carolina house candidate Marcus Brandon has pledged to introduce a bill to create single-payer healthcare in that state. Brandon, whom I know and like and who worked for Congressman Dennis Kucinich's 2008 presidential campaign, is a candidate in North Carolina House District 60. That's near Greensboro, where I can just picture Marcus sitting at a lunch counter and refusing to be provoked.

Brandon has promised that if he is elected, the first piece of legislation he will introduce will be the "North Carolina Healthcare Act" which will provide universal single-payer healthcare to every citizen of the state.

Brandon says that he remains a supporter of national single-payer healthcare and will continue lobbying for passage of HR 676, Congressman John Conyers' bill:

"The HR 676 fight is definitely not over, but we must now strategically shift the focus to the state level. When other states see that we can cut the cost of healthcare, streamline our medical industry, and still provide universal coverage to all North Carolinians, then all of the sudden, single-payer health care doesn't look so bad."

Brandon argues that a single-payer system could save over \$1.5 billion per year in reduced bureaucracy in the state of North Carolina alone. And he speaks confidently about making this happen:

"North Carolina is poised to be the first state to adopt single-payer, once I am able to introduce it. North Carolinians are ready for real solutions to healthcare. North Carolina has the third highest healthcare cost of any state, while it sags at 37th in average income. This is a disparity that most North Carolinians feel when they have to think about healthcare. Every day, as I am knocking on doors to talk to voters, I hear stories of people who cannot afford insurance and become victims of this for-profit industry."

Brandon says his bill is similar to other states' initiatives such as the "Minnesota Health Act"

or the “California Universal Healthcare Act.” Brandon points to these two bills as excellent examples of how a single payer healthcare system could be both fiscally sound and provide full coverage.

Brandon served in 2007 and 2008 as Dennis Kucinich’s National Finance Director and Deputy Campaign Manager. He says that Kucinich inspired him:

“Dennis urged me to run for office so we could build a state-by-state grassroots movement for single payer and other progressive issues. My campaign for the North Carolina House is an extension of the work I did with Dennis Kucinich.”

While Kucinich has struggled unsuccessfully thus far to pass federal legislation facilitating the state creation of single-payer healthcare systems, states are pressing ahead and will deal with lawsuits from “health” corporations when and if they arise.

Marcus Brandon’s website is at <http://www.marcusbrandon.com>

He has a primary on May 4th. Those who want a real healthcare system in this country would be wise to pour money into his campaign and those of other state leaders across the country.

Alternatively we could keep putting all our eggs in the basket of fantasies about the United States Senate getting its act together.

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