

Medicare for All Now: The US Supreme Court Should Rule with the People

By [Margaret Flowers](#) and [Kevin Zeese](#)

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Six years after Massachusetts enacted the state version of Obama's health law, the people of Massachusetts are not happy. According to a [June 11th poll in Massachusetts](#), 78% of patients say the cost of care in Massachusetts is a serious problem and 63% say it has gotten worse in the last five years. [Patients report](#) longer waits, higher premiums, higher co-pays and are less satisfied with health care. The [number of bankruptcies due to medical illness](#) and costs has continued to increase in Massachusetts too.

Despite what the corporate media report, Romney-Care, on which Obama-Care is modeled, is not working.

Americans want the Supreme Court to find the Obama law unconstitutional. More than two-thirds of Americans hope the Supreme Court will overturn some or all of the 2010 health care law, according to a [June 7th New York Times-CBS poll](#). A mere 24% said they hoped the court "would keep the entire health care law in place." Forty-one percent of those surveyed said the court should strike down the entire law, and another 27% said the justices should overturn only the individual mandate, the requirement that people purchase private insurance if they are not insured or pay a fine.

Overturning the entire law may have less of an impact now that three of the nation's largest insurers, [UnitedHealth, Aetna and Humana, say they will continue popular provisions](#) such as allowing young adults under 26 to gain coverage under their parents' plans and covering preventive care.

And overturning the law may provide an opportunity to push for a real solution to the ongoing health care crisis, to finally create a national universal and publicly-financed health insurance such as improved Medicare for All.

Perhaps this time around the nation could have a real debate about proven solutions to the fundamental problems causing the health care crisis. Private for-profit insurance and medical corporations are at the heart of that crisis. It was [these corporations that heavily influenced](#) and in some cases wrote the Obama health legislation so that it enhanced their profit margins.

For example, emails and other documents recently released by congressional investigative committees find that the Obama administration worked closely with the Pharmaceutical industry, agreeing to a back-room deal that protected their profits by opposing the re-importation of prescription medicines at lower prices. Re-importation was something

President Obama supported in his 2008 campaign when he criticized the Republicans' behind-closed-doors deals with Big Pharma.

Further [the White House coordinated](#) their \$150 million advertising campaign with major pharmaceutical companies. And nearly \$70 million was spent through two Super PACs — political action committees — organized by White House officials. Advocacy groups like [Families USA and the unions coordinated](#) their advertising with the White House and Big Pharma too.

The Obama law will not control costs, provide universal coverage or improve the quality of health care. More and more commentators are recognizing that [there is a constitutional way to do so](#) - remove two words “over 65” from the Medicare law. This would cover every American and be a major step toward improving health outcomes in the United States.

In [an amicus curae brief](#), we joined 50 doctors to make the case that Congress has already demonstrated it can regulate healthcare markets effectively by implementing single payer systems such as Medicare or the Veterans Health Administration.

We argued that the mandate was obviously unconstitutional, otherwise Congress could “reform” any failing private industry - whether it be automobiles, coal, pharmaceuticals or any other - by enacting legislation requiring every that American purchase the industry's goods or services in exchange for some perceived public good the industry provides. As some of the justices noted in oral argument, this would change the relationship between citizen and government. Indeed, forcing the purchase of products is crony capitalism on steroids.

The brief demonstrates the superior efficiencies of single-payer systems. Only 2% of Medicare's dollars go to administration and overhead, compared to private insurance which spends 16.7%. Under a single payer system, overall administrative costs would fall from the current 33% of health care spending to less than 5%, saving hundreds of billions of dollars. In fact, studies conducted by the nonpartisan General Accounting Office and the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office have consistently concluded that if a national single payer system were implemented in the United States, administrative cost-savings alone would be enough to guarantee universal coverage without increasing overall healthcare spending

The brief shows that the cost of Medicare has increased more slowly than the cost of health care generally and more slowly than the cost of private insurance. And Medicare is rated highly by senior citizens, who are its primary beneficiaries, 51% of seniors give their health insurance an “excellent” rating.

Single payer has been [supported by super majorities](#) of the American people for more than a decade. This silenced majority of Americans who wanted real universal health care under a national health plan may get another opportunity to push for what they want if the Supreme Court rules with the people and against crony capitalist health care.

Medicare for all saves lives and saves money. Say ‘No’ to Romney/Obama health care and ‘Yes’ to Medicare for all now.

Margaret Flowers, a pediatrician **Kevin Zeese**, an attorney, are both advocates for single payer health care and the co-direct, www.ItsOurEconomy.US which filed an amicus brief along with Single Payer Action and 50 doctors urging the court to find the mandate

unconstitutional.

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Articles by: **[Margaret Flowers](#)** and **[Kevin Zeese](#)**

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