

If this bill were a step forward, we would support it

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by Margaret Flowers, MD

If this bill were a step forward, we would support it.

If we believed and evidence indicated that this bill could be “tweaked” into something better, we would support it.

But this bill is a step backwards, a step away from single payer. This bill further cements the privatization of health care, further enriches the industries that are the problem.

We are seeing the same scenario play out at the national level that has played out at the state level for decades. People see the suffering because it is very real. They are told that we must do something and that this all they can get. So the people accept this believing it is an incremental step towards reform. And guess what – it is not a step in the right direction. This type of reform has failed every time. This is why we continue to be in a health care crisis.

As this passes, the public will be told it is a solution. They will be told to wait and see how it works when it is implemented in 2014. In the meantime, people will continue to suffer, go bankrupt or die of preventable causes. This is unacceptable.

We want health CARE reform. Health insurance reform makes no sense. Health insurance is very regulated but they are rich enough and clever enough to evade regulation. We will not support health insurance reform: it is a waste of time, money and human life.

If we want real reform, it isn't going to be pretty. It can't be brought in through the back door or by tweaking. We will have to take on a very powerful industry that currently owns the White House, Congress and the media. But work for anything less is a waste of time. The smallest increment of change that will be effective is to change to publicly funded health care.

It is not going to be another 10 years or 50 years before we get real reform if this bill fails. The single payer movement is growing. We can organize and push for real reform. But we must stand strong and united on our principles. We must put single payer on the table. It won't happen any other way.

Dr. Margaret Flowers, a Maryland pediatrician, is PNHP's Congressional Fellow.