



### Chair's Message

## Happy and Healthy New Year to all in the 34th!

It feels like months since we last met! I'm ready to get back to work, how about you???

But first things first - please join us for our second **Pop Up Social** being held on **Friday, January 7th from 5:30-8pm at Best Of Hands Barrelhouse - 7500 35th Ave SW**. This is our casual, no business, low-effort social gathering which will help us get through meeting via Zoom. We did this in November at Beer Star in White Center and it was a big success. Special Guest Senator Nguyen has this event on his calendar as well. Come out with us and talk politics, current events and anything else on your mind. If you have an idea for a pop up social location - email the chair at [chair@34dems.org](mailto:chair@34dems.org).

Nearly one year ago, a rabid mob forced their way into the US Capitol in an effort to halt the certification of the electoral vote and overturn the 2020 election in favor of Donald Trump. It's still a bit hard to

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## It's Time To Renew Your Membership With the 34th District Democrats!

Happy New Year, 34th District Democrats! With the start of 2022 comes membership renewal season once again. As a member, you have the ability to vote on official business such as our policy proposals, resolutions, budgets and endorsements. This year is a midterm election year and we will be busy working to elect Democrats up and down the ballot locally, in the hotly contested 8th and in key battleground states. In order to participate in the endorsement votes, you need to sign up or renew your membership well in advance of the vote -- but if you become a 2022 member today, you won't have to worry about missing any of the deadlines! And you can start the year off with the spirit of charity knowing that your monthly-sustaining or one-time membership dues will go towards paying for the tools our PCOs and volunteers use to GOTV.

Please be advised that anyone can be a member of the 34th District Democrats by signing up, but you must live in the 34th District to be eligible for endorsement votes. This is always true, especially in a redistricting year. As you sign up, please verify that your address is still within the bounds of the 34th. We will not be able to provide refunds for out-of-district households.

**Join us today and show your support for our organization. We need you in 2022!**

## January 12, 2022

### Meeting Notice

Register [HERE](#)

**6:30pm** - Zoom opens for pre-meeting program:

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)  
presentation on the effects of the pandemic on  
mental health

**7:30pm** - Call to Order

**Opening Ceremonies** (15m)

Approval of Agenda and Minutes (2m)  
Budget and Membership Report (10m)

**Membership Vote:**

Schools First Capital Levies Donation  
Division of Holiday Gifts Budget

**Candidate Spotlight** (6m)

Judge Kuljinder Dhillon  
King Conservation District Supervisor Board  
Kirsten Haugen

**2021 34th LD Democrats Awards Presentation** (20m)

**Announcements** (10m)

**Resolution to Consider** (10m)

**Executive Board Election** (5m)

**Good of the Order**

**Adjourn 9pm**

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# Executive Board

## Elected Officers

**Carla Rogers** | Chair  
chair@34dems.org

**Rachel Glass** | First Vice Chair  
vicechair1@34dems.org

Second Vice Chair | **Vacant**

**Chris Porter** | State Committee Person  
wsdccc@34dems.org

State Committee Person | **Vacant**

**Norman Sigler** | King Co. Committeeperson  
kcdccm@34dems.org

**Leah Griffin** | King Co. Committeeperson  
kcdccw@34dems.org

**Aaron Garcia** | King Co. Committee  
kcdccma@34dems.org

**Bunny Hatcher** | King Co. Committee  
kcdccwa@34dems.org

**Sara Smith** | Secretary  
secretary@34dems.org

**Julie Whitaker** | Treasurer  
treasurer@34dems.org

## Committee Chairs

**Sarah Koch** | Bylaws & Rules  
bylaws@34dems.org

**Colleen Hinton** | Caucus and Elections  
caucus@34dems.org

**Dawn Rains** | Community Partnerships  
coalitions@34dems.org

**Carla Rogers** | Communications  
digcomm@34dems.org

**Bunny Hatcher** | Endorsements &  
Resolutions  
endorse-reso@34dems.org

Equity & Social Justice | **Vacant**

**Currently Vacant** | Fundraising & Events  
fundraising@34dems.org

**Trey Lykins** | Membership & Hospitality  
membership@34dems.org

**Steve Butts & Karen Richter** | Outreach  
outreach@34dems.org

**Nick Bonazza** | PCO Coordination  
pco@34dems.org

**Currently Vacant** | Platform & Leg. Action

**Rachel Glass** | Programs  
vicechair1@34dems.org

**Estey Chen** | Young Democrats  
34yd@34dems.org

## Other Roles

**Zachary Ramels** | Volunteer Coordinator  
Volunteer@34dems.org

**Carla Rogers** | Webmaster  
webmaster@34dems.org

**Steve Butts** | Newsletter Editor  
newsletter@34dems.org

**Gina Topp** | Parliamentarian

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digest this piece of history as our own. While unsuccessful, it created reverberations that can still be felt today. Many in the Republican Party attempt to deny, minimize, or normalize the legacy of the attempted coup. Investigators in both the Justice Department and Congress continue to dig into exactly what happened but will justice be served? Do not forget this moment in time. May it inspire you to fight for democracy here in our own country - something we may never have imagined would be necessary. We must stick together as Democrats - don't let them tear us apart.

As we slide into 2021, I am reminded of the great successes we had but also how much there is yet to do in 2022. It has been a long first year of my two-year term. It's a lot of work, at times I have become overwhelmed. I need strong leaders and 'doers' to keep up the pace. With the upcoming redistricting, we will have another role become vacant - Caucus and Elections Chair. This is a critical role for our delegate caucus in the spring. We can't continue to make progress without all of our board positions filled and contributing. Please consider stepping up to any of the 4 remaining open positions (2nd Vice Chair, Platform and Legislative Action Chair, Social Justice & Equity Chair and Resolutions & Endorsements Co-Chair). If you want to learn more - email or text me!

The election season has already opened this year as we have February elections to plan for. There will be one **King County Conservation District Supervisor** seat filled in February, seat #2. We will hear from at least one candidate at our January meeting. We also endorsed the upcoming **Seattle Schools Capital Levies (Prop 1 and Prop 2)** at the November meeting. Please look for your ballots coming soon! Encourage your neighbors and families to cast their votes as well. This is a warm up for the midterms later this year.

Here's to a bright New Year and a fond farewell to 2021!

**Carla Rogers**

34th LD Chair - [chair@34dems.org](mailto:chair@34dems.org) - 206-432-1998

## Redistricting Updates

Will this process ever end? We hope so. Regardless of what you may have heard, the process is not complete and we are not officially through redistricting. The Supreme Court punted the decision to the Legislature by accepting the final maps as is from the committee. This means that we are now awaiting the Legislature to vote on the maps. There are currently open lawsuits pending against the process so this may not be quick. Until this vote is complete in the affirmative, we are business as usual.

Once the vote is complete and assuming it is ratified, we will move into a period of 45 days where we will vote (PCOs) to reorganize or leave the current leadership in place (chair). I estimate doing this vote in March but it could happen as soon as February. None of our current elected board members will be affected by the current maps so this should be simple.

Once that has happened, the new district boundaries and officers will be official.

PCOs in affected precincts will remain PCOs and simply move to their new district (the 33rd). I will connect you all via email to the chair of the 33rd Terri Lindeke. Any incoming PCOs will move into our district as well. We will gain 2 PCOs from Burien (within 5 precincts) and lose 14 of our rockstar Burien PCOs. We are also gaining Georgetown, SODO and a small area of downtown. We do not yet know how many precincts will come from these areas as they are not highly populated.

Please stay tuned as the short session begins on January 10th, there are sure to be updates!

## Election Notification

We have a candidate who has stepped up to run for one of our open board positions. On January 12, we will have an election for the Washington State Democrats Central Committee Representative (female or non-binary). If you are interested in running for this office, please email the chair at [chair@34dems.org](mailto:chair@34dems.org). Only PCOs will vote in this election.

*Candidate's Statement...*

### Roxanne Thayer for WA State Dems Committeeperson

Members of the 34th Legislative District Democrats, my name is Roxanne Thayer and I have lived in the 34th for over 40 years, currently on Vashon Island. I was a Bernie Sanders delegate at the LD Caucus in 2016 and a Sanders State delegate in 2020. I currently serve on the 34th LD Health Care Caucus; the Women's Advisory Board to the King County Council; and with Whole Washington and Health Care is a Human Right to bring universal health care to our State. I am a graduate of The Evergreen State College, bachelors; Seattle University, masters; and University of Washington, doctorate in Education Policy and Leadership with a Focus on Issues of Social Justice. I am a strong advocate for the progressive values our 34th LD stands for and it will be my honor to work for those values as the 34th's female member of the Washington State Democratic Central Committee.

We are still searching for our next **2nd Vice Chair, Platform and Legislative Action Committee Chair, Equity and Social Justice Committee Chair, and Resolutions and Endorsements Co-Chair**. Once redistricting is final, our Caucus and Elections Chair position will also be vacant. This is only a 1 year commitment - with terms ending December 31, 2022. Help make 2022 successful for the 34th Dems by volunteering as an executive board member! To learn more about the roles, email [vicechair1@34dems.org](mailto:vicechair1@34dems.org) or [chair@34dems.org](mailto:chair@34dems.org).

## Final Call for Bylaws and Endorsement Rules Input!

**Sarah Koch** and the **Bylaws and Rules Committee** are working on updates to our Bylaws and Endorsement Rules. Please provide your input to [bylaws@34dems.org](mailto:bylaws@34dems.org) by **midnight January 15**. The Committee will meet monthly until March when proposed Bylaws will be shared with the membership for consideration and vote at the April 13 membership meeting. Bylaws are crucial for our organization to run smoothly. Email Sarah and the team at [bylaws@34dems.org](mailto:bylaws@34dems.org).

[Review the current Bylaws](#)   [Review the current Endorsement Rules](#)

**Your Executive Board Meeting  
For January is**

**Wednesday the 19th, 7:00 to 8:30 pm.**

Please email the chair to join:  
[chair@34dems.org](mailto:chair@34dems.org)



**January 34th Dems Pop Up Social  
Friday, January 7, 5:30 to 8pm**

at  
**Best of Hands Barrelhouse**  
7500 35th Ave SW

## Have We Started Building Back Better?

A [PSARA](#) webinar featuring



**Rep. Pramila Jayapal**

Moderated by Jeff Johnson and Karen Richter  
**Co-sponsored by the 34th District Democrats**  
**Tuesday, January 25, 5:00 p.m.**

To REGISTER for the webinar, click [HERE](#)

For more info, email: [organizer@psara.org](mailto:organizer@psara.org)  
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action  
[psara.org](http://psara.org)

## Join the Fundraiser Planning Committee

We are planning to hold an in-person fundraising event mid-year in 2022. This will be our only major fundraiser for the year so I'm calling all party planners to invest in our organization by sitting on the committee. This DOES NOT mean you will be asking for donations, there are a lot of aspects to be planned: venue, food, beverage, activities and logistics. Please email the chair ([chair@34dems.org](mailto:chair@34dems.org)) if you are interested in helping! We will be meeting the first week of February.



## Contact Information and Committee Assignments for Our Legislators

### Senator Joe Nguyen

#### Assistant Floor Leader

Human Services,  
Reentry & Rehabilitation (Vice  
Chair); Environment; Rules;  
Energy & Technology;  
Transportation

213 John A. Cherberg Building  
PO Box 40434  
Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 786 - 7667



### Representative Eileen Cody

Chair, Health Care & Wellness;  
Appropriations

303 John L. O'Brien Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 786 - 7978



### Representative Joe Fitzgibbon

Chair, Environment & Energy;  
Appropriations;  
Rural Development, Agriculture  
& Natural Resources  
305 John L. O'Brien Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 786 - 7952



## Letters and Submitted Articles

We are Democrats, and like most Democrats we have strong opinions and like to express them. We welcome letters and articles.

All submissions are subject to editing. If submissions need to be shortened, you will be given the option of editing your own work.

Photos and notices of upcoming events are always welcome.

**The deadline for the February 2022 newsletter will be Thursday January 27, 2022**

Mail to Steve Butts,  
10254 36th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98146  
or email to newsletter@34dems.org

## Upcoming February Elections

### Seattle Public Schools Levy Renewals - February 8

We endorsed a YES for these two levies at our November meeting. Seattle voters...watch for your ballot after January 19!



#### Prop. 1: Educational Programs

and Operations levy (EP&O) would replace the expiring EP&O, which was approved by Seattle voters in

2019. This levy funds additional staffing positions, critical programs like Special Education and services that are not fully funded by the state. This levy also provides extracurricular student opportunities like music, band, art and athletics.

#### Prop. 2: Buildings, Technology, and Academics/Athletics V Capital Levy (BTA V)

This six-year levy would replace the expiring Building, Technology, and Academics/Athletics IV Capital Levy (BTA IV), which was approved by Seattle voters in 2016. The levy will fund computers for students, technology for classrooms, technology staff and supports. The levy will also fund repairs to aging buildings and ensure our students have safe, comfortable and healthy school buildings.

To learn more about the levies visit:

<https://www.seattleschools.org/district/levy>

### King Conservation District Board Seat #2 Election.

Voting begins **January 18** and ends **February 8**.

Ballots will be available to eligible voters online from January 18 at 8:00 AM through February 8 at 8:00 PM. Voters may return ballots electronically through the online ballot access system or print and mail ballots to King County Elections at 919 SW Grady Way, Suite 200, Renton, WA 98057. Ballots must be postmarked by February 8, 2022, and received by February 17, 2022, to be counted. Ballots may also be dropped off King County Elections at the above location.

KCD will have a computer and printer available at the KCD Main Office at 800 SW 39th St Suite #150, Renton, WA 98057 from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM from January 18, through February 8. Ballots will not be collected at the KCD office.

If you have questions regarding this special election and its unique procedure, please contact [elections@kingcd.org](mailto:elections@kingcd.org) or call 425-282-1900. For more information see below:

<https://kingcd.org/about/board-of-supervisors/elections-and-appointments/>





## December Service Project by the Numbers

Look what we did! The 34th Dems know how to put on a holiday service project.

- 3 spiral cut baked hams
- 3 pans of macaroni and cheese
- 1 pan of vegetarian lasagna
- 3 pans of vegetables
- 5 pounds of oranges
- 5 pounds of bananas
- 2 gallons of milk and 5 gallons of apple cider
- 1 pan of orange rolls for dessert!
- Blankets and warm clothing
- 5 new large-size coats
- 20 pairs of warm gloves
- 15 hats and neck warmers
- 60 pairs of socks
- A pile of good wishes inside holiday cards
- 32 volunteers!

We shared our Democratic values and our gifts of time and money! Thank you all for making this project successful at Camp Second Chance on December 18. We will do this again in the summer!



## Pass the Green New Deal WA Coalition Update

A little more than a year ago the 34th Dems passed a resolution where the district joined local efforts to support the Green New Deal at the Federal Level. See our resolution [HERE](#).

The Coalition has been meeting monthly and you can [check Coalition's website](#) to review the work that has been accomplished.

For some time the Coalition's efforts has been focused on getting President Biden's Build Back Better legislation passed. However now that it has stalled the Coalition will decide what to do next to win a just transition to clean energy, green jobs and a low carbon, high energy economy. We will discuss whether to work on some or all of the following:

- Increase pressure on Congress to end the filibuster, declare a climate emergency and pass stronger climate protection bills,
- Work on the press, the President and Executive branch to declare an emergency,
- Work with local and state projects to imagine and win Green New Deal type funding and policies.

At our last meeting we developed some thoughts on reasons for hope in 2022. We have all been subjected to hope-destroying statements in the media. The purpose of "too late" predictions" is to create the belief that we cannot solve this problem, that we are in a doom spiral. One of the best things we can do is to counter them by believing we can and will address these crises. We know they will not diminish in 2022 but there is hope to be found as well! Some examples and actions to take include:

- At the International Level during the Glasgow Conference a number of side agreements were made on coal, deforestation, methane fossil fuel subsidies and production. These are described on the Coalition's website along with actions to take.
- At the National Level the Build Back Better bill is still pending and we urge you not to stop sending messages of support to our members of Congress.
- At the State Level there are a number of bills coming up in 2022 that address climate change. Bills will be introduced in January and you can follow their progress and send messages of support.

At the Local Level we have a large number of environmental organizations including our own 34th LD which has an active Environmental Policy Caucus. You can join by contacting Chair Carla Rogers at [chair@34dems.org](mailto:chair@34dems.org).

These are just a sample of what we as individuals and as a Coalition can do in 2022. Thank you for reading this article and for persisting in the movement for a Green New Deal.

The Coalition has also put together some reasons for hope in 2022.

*Submitted by Karen Richter, the 34th's delegate to the NGD WA Coalition*

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## Voting Rights for Released Felons Restored Automatically Starting January 1

While some other states are actively in the process of restricting voting rights,

Washington continues its efforts to make voting as easy as possible. Washington State residents convicted of felonies will now be able to vote in every election [upon their release from prison - See HB 1078](#).



Previously, a newly-released felon needed to complete conditions of their sentence, including community supervision terms which can last for months...even years. This will greatly assist us as we register new voters this year, eliminating any guesswork as we encounter those formerly incarcerated. The state Department of Corrections estimates that around 20,000 people state-wide have their right to vote restored.

Special thanks go to Rep. Tarra Simmons (D-Bremerton), who wrote the bill. She has personal knowledge of the complexities of the old requirements, having herself once spent 30 months in prison.



# Resolution Regarding Non-discriminatory, Medically Comprehensive Healthcare in Washington State.

**Whereas**, many regions in Washington State have limited health care access; that is, with perhaps only one clinic and/or one hospital; and

**Whereas**, mergers and acquisitions in the Washington health care system have led to a near monopoly by certain healthcare institutions and hospitals; and

**Whereas**, some hospital ‘ethics committees’ may not be educated on dangerous health outcomes that surround denials of LGBTQ, and reproductive healthcare; yet all clinics and health care institutions receive significant amounts of federal and state funding through Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements, and may, therefore, be considered federal contractors; and

**Whereas**, some Washington State healthcare institutions are placing arbitrary limits on legal, medically accepted health procedures, and legally and medically approved reproductive and LGBTQ healthcare procedures; and

**Whereas**, some hospitals and healthcare institutions across the State are delaying and denying this legally and medically approved reproductive and LGBTQ care, using tactics which discriminate primarily against women, BIPOC communities, low income residents, and the LGBTQ community, thus endangering their mental and physical health, if not their *lives*. These hospitals and healthcare organizations are trafficking in discriminatory actions leading to neglect, cruelty, lack of service, and poor health outcomes; some healthcare organizations also fail to recognize the right of Washington State patients to use the State’s “death with dignity” law; and

**Whereas**, some hospitals and healthcare providers are putting *their* discriminatory regulations above Washington State laws and regulations and their patients’ *well-being*; and

**Whereas**, no Washington State health care institutions should be permitted to engage in healthcare restrictions that are intrinsically discriminatory against any race, sex, or LGBTQ status, and therefore damaging to patients’ mental and physical health; and

**Whereas**, by restricting or eliminating such procedures as family planning and contraceptives, tubal ligations, abortions, vasectomies, IVF treatments, and transgender surgeries, discriminatory health care systems in Washington State force their patients to abide by restrictions that are sexist, misogynistic, and anti-LGBTQ against their will, since in both urban and semi-isolated areas of Washington they may have only one clinic or hospital available to them. These patients are therefore effectively *discriminated against*, and prohibited from exercising their own rights in terms of their healthcare, and it is a violation of those patients’ civil rights.

**Therefore, be it resolved that** all healthcare institutions within the boundaries of Washington State cannot restrict any legal medical procedures when requested by patients. Public policy must protect women in need of reproductive health services, as well as BIPOC and LGBTQ patients, and the medical practitioners who would otherwise be prohibited from providing essential, medically comprehensive, and legal services when in discriminatory healthcare settings;

**Therefore, be it finally resolved that** It should fall to the Washington State Department of Health to ensure that all healthcare systems in Washington State, from this time forward, align themselves with best medical practices and best evidentiary outcomes, and that all procedures legal under Washington State law therefore be offered to patients. No Washington State healthcare provider, or hospital, should be allowed to discriminate in terms of health care services to their patients, whoever those patients are. Everyone deserves medically comprehensive, legal, quality health care, but not everyone is receiving it at this time.

Submitted by Roxanne Thayer as shared from 30th LD and modified by the 34th LD

**Note:** In the event that this Resolution affects religious health care institutions,

Article 1 of the Bill of Rights recognizes that the United States encompasses a multitude of religions and beliefs, all of which may have differing definitions of ‘morality’, differing definitions of Scripture, and entirely different modes of worship. Providing and delivering non-discriminatory, medically comprehensive, and legal health care, should be defined and enforced only by the State of Washington.

# Whole Washington to Begin New Universal Health Care Initiative Effort



Roxanne Thayer is calling out to all in the 34th LD interested in seeing universal healthcare in Washington State. Whole Washington will be giving a presentation and short video followed by a Q&A session at our February 9th meeting. Andre Stackhouse and 34th's own Jen Nye will officiate.

Whole Washington is working towards an initiative that will collect signatures between April and December, 2022. They are looking for "Signature Captains" and also others who are willing to collect signatures. The presentation will help people become more familiar with the work of Whole Washington, and build awareness of their new initiative drive.

In preparation for this program, Roxanne suggests reading a confessional by Wendell Potter. Potter is a former vice president of Cigna who became a whistleblower against the health insurance industry. He serves as president of the Center for Health and Democracy, @wendellpotter.

In his article Potter relates his part in spreading disinformation about the Canadian healthcare system to the media and politicians. These untruths were instrumental in killing any sort of public option in Obamacare. His August 2020 piece originally appeared in a Washington Post article [HERE](#). You can read Potter's portion below.

## ***The health care scare***

### **I sold Americans a lie about Canadian medicine. Now we're paying the price.**

By Wendell Potter

In my prior life as an insurance executive, it was my job to deceive Americans about their health care. I misled people to protect profits. In fact, one of my major objectives, as a corporate propagandist, was to do my part to "enhance shareholder value." That work contributed directly to a climate in which fewer people are insured, which has shaped our nation's struggle against the coronavirus, a condition that we can fight only if everyone is willing and able to get medical treatment. Had spokesmen like me not been paid to obscure important truths about the differences between the U.S. and Canadian health-care systems, tens of thousands of Americans who have died during the pandemic might still be alive.

In 2007, I was working as vice president of corporate communications for Cigna. That summer, Michael Moore was preparing to release his latest documentary, "Sicko," contrasting American health care with that in other rich countries. (Naturally, we looked terrible.) I spent months meeting secretly with my counterparts at other big insurers to plot our assault on the film, which contained many anecdotes about patients who had been denied coverage for important treatments. One example was 3-year-old Annette Noe. When her parents asked Cigna to pay for two

cochlear implants that would allow her to hear, we agreed to cover only one.

Clearly my colleagues and I would need a robust defense. On a task force for the industry's biggest trade association, America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), we talked about how we might make health-care systems in Canada, France, Britain and even Cuba look just as bad as ours. We enlisted APCO Worldwide, a giant PR firm. Agents there worked with AHIP to put together a binder of laminated talking points for company flacks like me to use in news releases and statements to reporters.

Here's an example from one AHIP brief in the binder: "A May 2004 poll found that 87% of Canada's business leaders would support seeking health care outside the government system if they had a pressing medical concern." The source was a 2004 book by Sally Pipes, president of the industry-supported Pacific Research Institute, titled "Miracle Cure: How to Solve America's Health Care Crisis and Why Canada Isn't the Answer." Another bullet point, from the same book, quoted the CEO of the Canadian Association of Radiologists as saying that "the radiology equipment in Canada is so bad that 'without immediate action radiologists will no longer be able to guarantee the reliability and quality of examinations.'"

Much of this runs against the experience of many Americans, especially the millions who take advantage of low pharmaceutical prices in Canada to meet their prescription needs. But there were more specific reasons

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to be skeptical of those claims. We didn't know, for example, who conducted that 2004 survey or anything about the sample size or methodology — or even what criteria were used to determine who qualified as a “business leader.” We didn't know if the assertion about imaging equipment was based on reliable data or was an opinion. You could easily turn up comparable complaints about outdated equipment at U.S. hospitals.

Nevertheless, I spent much of that year as an industry spokesman, my last after 20 years in the business, spreading AHIP's “information” to journalists and lawmakers to create the impression that our health-care system was far superior to Canada's, which we wanted people to believe was on the verge of collapse. The campaign worked. Stories began to appear in the press that cast the Canadian system in a negative light. And when Democrats began writing what would become the Affordable Care Act in early 2009, they gave no serious consideration to a publicly financed system like Canada's. We succeeded so wildly at defining that idea as radical that Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), then chair of the Senate Finance Committee, had single-payer supporters ejected from a hearing.

Today, the respective responses of Canada and the United States to the coronavirus pandemic prove just how false the ideas I helped spread were. There are more than three times as many coronavirus infections per capita in the United States, and the mortality rate is twice the rate in Canada. And although we now test more people per capita, our northern neighbor had much earlier successes with testing, which helped make a difference throughout the pandemic.

The most effective myth we perpetuated — the industry trots it out whenever major reform is proposed — is that Canadians and people in other single-payer countries have to endure long waits for needed care. Just last year, in a statement submitted to a congressional committee for a hearing on the Medicare for All Act of 2019, AHIP maintained that “patients would pay more to wait longer for worse care” under a single-payer system.

While it's true that Canadians sometimes have to wait weeks or months for elective procedures (knee replacements are often cited), the truth is that they do not have to wait at all for the vast majority of medical services. And, contrary to another myth I used to peddle — that Canadian doctors are flocking to the United States — there are more doctors per 1,000 people in Canada than here. Canadians see their doctors an average of 6.8 times a year, compared with just four times a year in this country.

Most important, no one in Canada is turned away from doctors because of a lack of funds, and Canadians can get tested and treated for the coronavirus without fear of receiving a budget-busting medical bill. That undoubtedly is one of the reasons Canada's covid-19 death rate is so much lower than ours. In America, exorbitant bills are a defining feature of our health-care system. Despite the assurances from President Trump and members of Congress that covid-19 patients will not be charged for testing or treatment, they are on the hook for big bills, according to numerous reports.

That is not the case in Canada, where there are no co-pays, deductibles or coinsurance for covered benefits. Care is free at the point of service. And those laid off in Canada don't face the worry of losing their health insurance. In the United States, by contrast, more than 40 million have lost their jobs during this pandemic, and millions of them — along with their families — also lost their coverage.

Then there's quality of care. By numerous measures, it is better in Canada. Some examples: Canada has far lower rates than the United States of hospitalizations from preventable causes like diabetes (almost twice as common here) and hypertension (more than eight times as common). And even though Canada spends less than half what we do per capita on health care, life expectancy there is 82 years, compared with 78.6 years in the United States.

When the pandemic reached North America, Canadian hospitals, which operate under annual global budgets — fixed payments typically allocated at the provincial and regional levels to cover operating expenses — were better prepared for the influx of patients than many U.S. hospitals. And Canada ramped up production of personal protective equipment much more quickly than we did.

Of the many regrets I have about what I once did for a living, one of the biggest is slandering Canada's health-care system. If the United States had undertaken a different kind of reform in 2009 (or anytime since), one that didn't rely on private insurance companies that have every incentive to limit what they pay for, we'd be a healthier country today. Living without insurance dramatically increases your chances of dying unnecessarily. Over the past 13 years, tens of thousands of Americans have probably died prematurely because, unlike our neighbors to the north, they either had no coverage or were so inadequately insured that they couldn't afford the care they needed. I live with that horror, and my role in it, every day.



Newsletter Editor  
10254 36th Ave. SW  
Seattle, WA 98146

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## Join the 34th District Democrats!

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