

## **Guaranteed Healthcare Stuck in Rules Committee**

By Lenny Potash

The Healthy California Act, SB 562 (Lara and Atkins) has been stalled in the State Assembly Rules Committee for, according to Speaker Rendon, because the bill still lacks details and specificity. It sounds like a bureaucratic nightmare but it's more than that. When there is political commitment to an issue, bills often move forward, even while lacking specifics. This happened recently with the Cap and Trade bill that Legislative leadership and the Governor supported. Ultimately, they filled in the gaps and passed the bill. What's different with this single payer healthcare bill?

Because of a great deal of popular support, the State Senate passed it leaving questions, including a funding plan, unanswered. There was a Finance Study that was completed and submitted in May showing clearly that,

- a) 70% of the billions of dollars currently being spent on healthcare in California is already publicly funded,
- b) SB 562 would result in significant saving for individuals, businesses and public employers.

The study also shows that the proposed Healthy CA Act will still require raising significant additional funding. It recommends a 2.3% tax on gross receipts and a 2.3% sales tax. These taxes have exemptions that assure small business and individuals with limited income are not over-burdened.

So how much is fully covered, comprehensive healthcare, that is not dependent on your employment or economic well-being worth to you? After all, the United States is the last of the industrialized nations in the world that does not assure its residents guaranteed healthcare. And we spend more than twice what other countries spend to leave millions without any healthcare coverage or seriously under-insured.

It's time for US to join the rest of the world and fully enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And it has a good chance of starting in California with SB 562. The bottom line here is that with the Healthy California Act, almost all businesses and individuals will experience real savings on the cost of healthcare as premiums, deductibles and co-pays are eliminated and every resident is entitled to equal, comprehensive and quality care without having insurance companies getting in the middle-- between you and your provider.