



Advancing “Medicare for All”

Resolution Number _____

WHEREAS:

Health care is a human right. Although capable of great medicine, America's health care system is in deep trouble. In spite of progressive efforts to regulate the for-profit health insurance and pharmaceutical industries, business interests are finding ways to undermine regulation and skirt the law; and

WHEREAS:

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), passed in 2010, made it possible for tens of millions of Americans to obtain health coverage, but did not resolve the problem that health insurance and pharmaceutical companies are still free to price health services and medicines well above what most working Americans can afford; and

WHEREAS:

Donald Trump and the GOP-led Congress have put tremendous weight into targeting the ACA for “repeal and replacement” despite the policy’s popularity with constituents, and have sided with big insurance and pharmaceutical companies over the interests of ordinary Americans; and

WHEREAS:

Unions have battled to achieve the highest standard of health care for their members and their members’ families, and those gains have lifted up health benefits for all workers, even those who have no union. All of these achievements are under constant attack now as costs rise and employers shift those costs to workers. Union multiemployer health plans are struggling under the unfair advantages allowed to non-union companies. Rising co-pays and deductibles make it more difficult for those who have insurance to get the care they need; and

WHEREAS:

Employers by and large seek to drop health benefits for early retirees, for spouses, for part timers. Some corporations use bankruptcy laws to shirk their contractual health care obligations. The rising cost of health insurance is blocking progress in wages and other areas; and

WHEREAS:

Insurance companies rather than patients are deciding which doctors we can see and which hospitals we can use. Drug company profits soar as, so far, Congress has not used the power of bulk purchasing to bring down the prices. The United States spends double per capita what other industrialized nations spend, yet ranks far below in life expectancy and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS:

It doesn’t have to be this way in one of the richest and most advanced countries in the world. Lives are at stake and every American should by rights have the best health care available, notwithstanding his or her financial means to pay for it. Our tax dollars subsidize the research, the medical schools, and the hospitals. Unions led the way in other industrialized countries to assure universal coverage with good care through a form of single payer. We can do it too; and

WHEREAS:

Expanded and Improved Medicare for All legislation will establish a single payer health care system by expanding a greatly improved Medicare to cover everyone. It will restore our right to choose our physicians and free us from insurance company interference in medical decisions. It will free our health care from corporate control; and

WHEREAS:

Expanded and Improved Medicare for All legislation should cover everyone for all necessary medical care including dental, prescription drugs, hospital, surgical, outpatient services, primary and preventive care, emergency services, mental health, home health, physical therapy, rehabilitation (including for substance abuse), vision care, chiropractic, eyeglasses, hearing aides, other medical devices and long term care; and

Expanded and Improved Medicare for All legislation can save hundreds of billions annually by eliminating the high overhead and profits of the private health insurance industry and by using our purchasing power to rein in the drug companies. The transition to national health insurance would apply the savings from administration and profits to expanded and improved coverage for all; and

By standing up for all working people and leading the effort to win healthcare for all, we will affirm labor's rightful role as a leader in the fight for social justice.

Therefore, Be It Resolved:

That AFSCME District Council 36 wholeheartedly endorses state and national legislative efforts that expand and improve “Medicare for All,” a single payer public health care program; and

Be It Further Resolved:

That AFSCME District Council 36 will work with other unions and community groups to build a groundswell of popular support and action for single payer universal health care until we make what is morally right for our state and for our country into what is also politically possible.

Submitted by:

Executive Board, AFSCME District Council 36

Committee Assignment

Committee Recommendation

Committee Action