

The quarterly newsletter of MassCare

CommonHealth

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Voters Confirm: The State Legislature Must Pass Medicare for All

The Medicare for All question passed. Not just in a couple districts, but in every single district where it was on the ballot.

We didn't just go for easy progressive districts, either. Medicare for all won in some cities and towns where Question 1 - the Fair Share amendment - did not win, including Hingham, Cohasset, and Weymouth on the South Shore, Berlin and Southborough in Central Mass, and West Springfield, Agawam, and East Longmeadow in Western Mass.

The 1st Essex district on the North Shore - which was just last session represented by a Republican - passed the measure with 62% in support.



And here's a campaign highlight: the vote passed with 61% support in House Speaker Ron Mariano's district, 3rd Norfolk. Rep. Mariano is not (yet!) a supporter of the bill.

Mass-Care has run single-payer questions before, and in some cases we did even better than we have

done historically. In 2010, the single-payer ballot question passed in Marlborough with 54% of the vote. This year the city passed the question with 63% of the vote!

In 2010, the single-payer ballot question passed in the two Jamaica Plain districts by 76% and 69%. This year it passed in the 15th Suffolk by an astounding 87%.

This is a testimony to the importance of the work we do between elections - educating and raising the consciousness of all voters about our corporate health care system and the single-payer alternative, and inculcating them against attacks against Medicare for All.

This was the result of many months of hard work by over

100 volunteers who began planning for this campaign a full year ago. After months of preparation, our members hit the streets in May to collect thousands of signatures to get on the ballot in a record 20 districts; then they canvassed between August and November to get a "Yes" vote in every district.

For the first time ever, Mass-Care's literature was translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Vietnamese - allowing us to reach new communities around the state. With the support of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, we handed out over 15,000 pieces of literature in five languages.

We door-knocked, canvassed, called, and texted



Boston-area medical students phonebank for Mass-Care

Interview: Lead Sponsor Sen. Jamie Eldridge



Sen. Jamie Eldridge (right), representing the Middlesex and Worcester District, is the lead sponsor of the Act to Establish Medicare for All in Massachusetts and a longtime legislative ally of Mass-Care.

Mass-Care: Why is Medicare for All important to you and how did you first get involved in the movement?

Jamie Eldridge: I have always supported making healthcare a right, and believe that the best way to do that is through a single-payer system. I became even more committed to the vision in 2009 and 2010, when I personally suffered a serious medical challenge where I amassed tens of thousands of dollars in bills in order to fully recover, which inspired me in my 2010 re-election campaign to do more outreach to voters who had had similar medical crises, and listen to their stories. In 2010, I took on the Medicare For All bill from a Senate colleague, and I've been proud to fight hard for passing the legislation ever since.

MC: Is Medicare for All an issue that matters to your constituents? How do you respond to constituents who disagree?

JE: I'd say healthcare matters a tremendous amount to my constituents, and some of those constituents feel strongly that dramatically improving healthcare can only be achieved by

establishing Medicare For All. A majority of those concerned about healthcare are focused on how it has directly affected them and their families and friends, but are not aware of policy decisions at the state and federal level that would improve healthcare security and outcomes. For those constituents who disagree with Medicare For All, I often ask them how they feel about our current for-profit, private healthcare system, and then about the current Medicare program, to have a productive discussion about what Medicare For All really is, and what it isn't.

MC: We now have a Democratic Governor, and both chambers elected at least a few more progressives. Do we have a pathway to passing the bill?

JE: I certainly think the pathway has improved to dramatically improve access to healthcare, address racial and economic inequities in healthcare, and change how government decides how to spend precious taxpayer dollars on healthcare, all of which is to say that the pathway to pass the bill has improved. However, I believe that making single payer the law of the Commonwealth, takes more than just elected officials supporting Medicare For All, it takes stronger advocacy from progressive, labor and healthcare groups, and the general public, to directly advocate with elected officials, from legislators to the Governor.

MC: Question 5 won in some pretty conservative districts this November. Do you think those legislators can be convinced to support single payer? How?

JE: Polls have consistently show that a majority of Americans (and therefore Massachusetts residents) believe that healthcare should be a right. I think the argument needs to be made to legislators in those conservative districts that the only real path to making healthcare a right, is through Medicare For All legislation – removing profit from healthcare. For such legislators, I think it is also critical for Medicare For All supporters to interact with legislators about what is wrong with our current healthcare system, including stories about their personal experiences with the system. Stories, often more powerfully than facts, move elected officials. **MC**



Mass-Care launches monthly giving program!

Guardians of the Commonwealth are monthly donors who power the campaign for single-payer health care — day in and day out. Monthly giving helps us to budget and provides a predictable stream of income, ensuring more of your donation is spent on our mission. If all of our donors committed to monthly giving, we could drastically reduce the amount of time we spend on fundraising!

Make an ongoing commitment to the fight for equitable and just healthcare for all by joining the dozens of members providing regular monthly support to Mass-Care. Sign-up online today!



Ballot Question... from page 1

thousands of residents about Question 5. These conversations were one of the best parts of the campaign - talking to people about how a Medicare for All system would work, answering their questions, and bringing them on board.

One man emailed me after early voting that if I had not canvassed him earlier that fall, he likely would have voted “no”. Mass-Care volunteers made this kind of interaction happen all over the state.

Canvassers in Pittsfield

This campaign not only further demonstrated the wide support that Medicare for All enjoys across the state, but brought in hundreds of new members to Mass-Care who had never heard of the organization before but now want to get involved. This is the work of growing our movement!

Given this broad mandate to go ahead with Medicare for All legislation, the legislature next session should finally give the bill a proper hearing and pass it out of Committee instead of killing it in study.

Thank all of you who came out to canvass, phonebank, collect signatures, donate to the campaign, and helped to spread the word about this campaign!



Question 5 Results (Unofficial)

- 25th Middlesex (85%)
- 2nd Berkshire (75%)
- 7th Hampden (59%)
- 6th Hampden (55%)
- 8th Hampden (58%)
- 12th Hampden (55%)
- 2nd Franklin (64%)
- 14th Middlesex (64%)
- 12th Worcester (55%)
- 4th Middlesex (63%)
- 1st Essex (63%)
- 3rd Norfolk (61%)
- 3rd Plymouth (57%)
- 12th Suffolk (77%)
- 13th Suffolk (68%)
- 15th Suffolk (87%)
- 33rd Middlesex (73%)
- 34th Middlesex (80% in Somerville)
- 35th Middlesex (70% in Malden)
- 23rd Middlesex (75% in Arlington)

Next steps

In 15 of the 20 districts where we ran the ballot question, Representatives are either incumbents who are not cosponsors of the bill, or first timers who have just been elected. Getting these legislators on board is our next step! We will be setting up meetings to ask them to cosponsor the Medicare for All legislation we’ll be re-introducing in 2023, and creating relationships with our new Representatives.

Even if your legislators cosponsored this session, we’ll need to ask them again for the next session.

If you would like to participate in a constituent delegation, contact us at Masscare.org.

Bill review

By Jon Weissman

Every two years before the new legislative session, Mass-Care reviews the Medicare for All bill. We made few changes, having made several changes four and two years ago. The most impactful change is that the following are excluded from the tax on unearned income: Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Income, unemployment benefits, workers compensation benefits, sick pay, paid family and medical leave, capital gains resulting from the sale of a primary residence or owner-occupied two- or three-family rental property, and defined contribution and defined benefit pension payments.

After a legal review and approval by Mass-Care, the bill will be submitted by our lead sponsors in January.

Take Action for State Medicare for All!

The Massachusetts Medicare for All Act - **H.1267** and **S.766** - would create a single-payer system in the state of Massachusetts, guaranteeing equitable health care access for every resident of the Commonwealth.

If you don't see your Senator or your Representative listed as co-sponsors below, make sure to call and email them and ask them to cosponsor these bills. Contact info can be found on www.masscare.org.

Current Senate Co-Sponsors

Sen. Chang-Diaz, Sonia
Sen. Comerford, Joanne
Sen. Cyr, Julian
Sen. DiDomenico, Sal
Sen. Diana DiZoglio
Sen. Eldridge, James
Sen. Feeney, Paul
Sen. Gobi, Anne
Sen. Gomez, Adam
Sen. Hinds, Adam
Sen. Jehlen, Patricia
Sen. Keenan, John
Sen. Lesser, Eric

Sen. Lewis, Jason
Sen. Rausch, Rebecca

Current House Co-Sponsors

Rep. Arciero, James (2nd Middlesex)
Rep. Ashe, Brian (2nd Hampden)
Rep. Balseer, Ruth (12th Middlesex)
Rep. Barber, Christine (34th Middlesex)
Rep. Barrett III, John (1st Berkshire)
Rep. Blais, Natalie (1st Franklin)
Rep. Capano, Peter (11th Essex)
Rep. Carey, Dan (2nd Hampshire)
Rep. Ciccolo, Michelle (15th Middlesex)
Rep. Connolly, Mike (26th Middlesex)
Rep. Coppinger, Edward - (10th Suffolk)
Rep. Devers, Marcos (16th Essex)
Rep. Diggs, Kip - (2nd Barnstable)
Rep. Doherty, Carol - (3rd Bristol)
Rep. Domb, Mindy (3rd Hampshire)
Rep. Donahue, Daniel (16th Worcester)
Rep. DuBois, Michelle - 10th Plymouth
Rep. Duffy, Patricia (5th Hampden)
Rep. Elugardo, Nika - (15th Suffolk)
Rep. Farley-Bouvier, Tricia (3rd Berkshire)
Rep. Fernandes, Dylan (Barnstable, Dukes)
Rep. Garballey, Sean (23rd Middlesex)
Rep. Garlick, Denise (13th Norfolk)
Rep. Gentile, Carmine (13th Middlesex)
Rep. González, Carlos (10th Hampden)
Rep. Gouveia, Tami (14th Middlesex)
Rep. Hawkins, James (2nd Bristol)
Rep. Higgins, Natalie (4th Worcester)

Rep. Honan, Kevin (17th Suffolk)
Rep. Howard, Vanna (17th Middlesex)
Rep. Kearney, Patrick Joseph (4th Plymouth)
Rep. Kushmerek, Michael - (3rd Worcester)
Rep. LeBoeuf, David (17th Worcester)
Rep. Lewis, Jack Patrick (7th Middlesex)
Rep. Linsky, David Paul (5th Middlesex)
Rep. Livingstone, Jay (8th Suffolk)
Rep. Madaro, Adrian (1st Suffolk)
Rep. Malia, Elizabeth (11th Suffolk)
Rep. Mark, Paul (2nd Berkshire)
Rep. Minicucci, Christina (14th Essex)
Rep. Miranda, Liz - 5th Suffolk
Rep. Murray, Brian - 10th Worcester
Rep. Nguyen, Tram (18th Essex)
Rep. O'Day, James (14th Worcester)
Rep. Oliveira, Jacob (7th Hampden)
Rep. Owens, Steve (29th Middlesex)
Rep. Peake, Sarah (4th Barnstable)
Rep. Pignatelli, Smitty (4th Berkshire)
Rep. Ramos, Orlando (9th Hampden)
Rep. Robinson, Maria (6th Middlesex)
Rep. Rogers, David - (24th Middlesex)
Rep. Ryan, Daniel (2nd Suffolk)
Rep. Sabadosa, Lindsay (1st Hampshire)
Rep. Santiago, Jon (9th Suffolk)
Rep. Sena, Danillo (37th Middlesex)
Rep. Stanley, Thomas (9th Middlesex)
Rep. Tyler, Chynah (7th Suffolk)
Rep. Ultrino, Steven (33rd Middlesex)
Rep. Uyerhoeven, Erika (27th Middlesex)
Rep. Vargas, Andres - (3rd Essex)
Rep. Vitolo, Tommy (15th Norfolk)
Rep. Williams, Bud (11th Hampden)

Join Your Local Hub

Eastern Mass

ACTON/CONCORD: Three Rivers Progressive Mass.

◆ Contact: Kim Connors: trag@progressivemass.com

BOSTON: Jamaica Plain Progressives

◆ Contact Bruce Fleischer: brucefleischer75@gmail.com

BLUE HILLS: Our Revolution Blue Hills

◆ Contact Kate Shore: Kinashore@verizon.net

MALDEN: Our Revolution Malden

◆ Contact Mats: mats.holmqvist.boston@gmail.com

SOUTH SHORE: South Shore Medicare For All

◆ Contact Heather Clark: heather@rodley.com

CAPE COD: Cape Cod Coalition for Universal Healthcare

◆ Contact Bonnie Shepard: bonnie.shepard@gmail.com

Western Mass

WESTERN MASS MEDICARE FOR ALL

◆ Contact Jon Weissman: info@wmmedicareforall.org

FRANKLIN COUNTY: Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution, Single Payer Task Force

◆ Contact Judy Atkins: judithga@comcast.net

HILLTOWNS: Hilltown Medicare for All Advocacy Group

◆ Contact Larry Cervelli: ridgetoprambler@outlook.com

Don't see a hub near you?

Help start one! Contact director@masscare.org to find out how you can connect an existing organization to Mass-Care, or start a new one.