

Debate: Is Health Care a Right?
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Closing Statement

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The arguments that dominated the health care bill's circuitous route through Congress were largely economic. We spend \$2.4T or about 18% of GDP on health care, more than any other Westernized nation and don't even have the best quality. This was making our businesses and products non-competitive in a globalized market place and overwhelming the capacity of the government to maintain its own level of health care services to the 40% or more of the population receiving some form of government-sponsored care.

But perhaps we need to reframe the debate?

The current state of our health care is discriminatory. That would make it a violation of human rights as argued by President Roosevelt in 1943. When the civil rights of a group in America is violated, the government, albeit slowly, tends to react to correct this situation.

What if the health care issue was reframed that way?

Denying American citizens civil rights on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation or country of origin is illegal. So should it be to deny health care to American citizens. If you can join the military, vote or secure a passport, you should be able to secure basic health care. It is not a commodity to be bought and sold like gold futures. It is not a charity. It is a human right.

To rectify the current system—or non-system—interaction with it should be simplified, it should be widely and readily available, accessible and affordable. If these criteria are not met, even if by de facto circumstances (like living in rural farm country), we should be seeking to correct it.

The U.S. is the only civilized country without a universal health care system. Rather we have 4 systems:

If you are under 65 with employer-provided insurance—you are in Germany.

If you are over 65 or poor, you are in Canada.

If you are a veteran, in the military or an Indian, you are in Great Britain.

And if you are none of the above, you are in sub-Saharan Africa with emergency rooms.

We need one system of health promotion and disease prevention with care of the sick an available necessity. Health care is a right.