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May 6, 2009

HEALTHCARE - THE BIGGEST INJUSTICE OF ALL.

Much has been said recently about Healthcare in our nation over the last 4 months, and it is right that this issue should be front and center of not only our minds, but of our consciences as well.

Personally, I have heard too many Conservative friends dismiss healthcare as a luxury or something that we should either buy or shut up about. I must ask them, and you, if we think that education is a luxury? Should we buy education or shut up about not having it? If we accept that the government has a responsibility for guaranteeing a basic level of education, why do the Conservatives balk at the idea that the government should guarantee that we are healthy enough to enjoy and participate in the educational process?

The truth is that we are the wealthiest nation on earth with one of the poorest healthcare records of any nation, ranking one step above Cuba in a recent survey. In 2007 we spent the most on healthcare (15.2% of GDP). And yet, we are not even in the top 16 when it comes to population per doctor (Cuba, followed by Estonia are the top two in this category). Despite all the money we spend on healthcare, we do not figure among the top 27 countries with regard to hospital beds per 1,000 people. The winner here in this category? Japan, followed by Belarus and Russia. We are the world's fifth most obese nation, though. And, incidentally, all these figures come from *The Economist*, which is itself a conservative publication.

When I hear anyone talk about how the government should stay out of healthcare, I can be sure of two things: (1) That person has healthcare insurance and (2) somewhere, somehow, that person is connected with the healthcare industry either socially or professionally. Ask any of the millions of Americans who have no healthcare insurance if they would like our government to guarantee them a basic level of coverage; I am sure they would not back away yelling "Socialist!"

It is time to stop pretending that this is an issue that does not affect each of us. We pay more for every product we buy because someone, somewhere has to pay for healthcare, be it insurance or the days off that a lack of an adequate healthcare system causes. More importantly, it is time to stop shoving this under the carpet because it is a moral issue: We, as the richest nation on earth, cannot sit by and watch our citizens choose between food and medicine. We cannot sit by while our fellow Americans sicken and, yes, die because they cannot afford to get help. Please, contact your Representative today, and let them know that you are mad as hell and won't put up with it any more.