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## **Is it time for U.S. Rep. Greg Walden to endorse a national single-payer health care program?**

MY VOICE: Better health care for more people

by Fuji Kreider, La Grande  
*The Observer*, May 23, 2017

More than 100 U.S. Representatives already have, including three other members of the Oregon delegation: Blumenauer, Bonamici and DeFazio. All are co-sponsors of HR 676, the national single-payer bill proposed by U.S. Rep. John Conyers of Michigan. Walden should join them. We — his constituents — should urge him to do so.

Health care policy challenges are not foreign to Walden. He is chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which, in the absence of a health care committee, is the de facto source of health care legislation in the U.S. House. As chair, Walden has struggled with Obamacare repeal, Obamacare revision and Obamacare replacement. And his struggle goes on.

It's a thankless and nearly impossible task: creating an American health care system that provides better care to more people for less money. Obamacare didn't achieve it. Ryancare won't achieve it. Restoring the crumbling health care financing that Obamacare replaced won't achieve it.

The president didn't know health care was so complicated? Walden certainly does. And what plan can achieve better care for lower cost? A national single-payer health care system.

How do I know? Because every single-payer health care system in the world — both public and private — provides better care to more people for less money than our uniquely dysfunctional American private health insurance industry.

How does single-payer save money? Not by restricting benefits, excluding sick people or reducing provider payment. Single-payer eliminates the need for private insurance administrators to review every billable health care event, a process that consumes 20 percent of our premium payments. Single-payer systems devote less than 5 percent to administration. The money recovered by switching to a single-payer system more than pays for the additional care to more people.

As if that weren't enough, a single-payer plan also eliminates medical bankruptcy, reduces labor-management disputes, decreases business costs and generates three times as many jobs as it eliminates. Those are significant benefits in themselves, but simply providing all American families with access to health care when they need it would be a giant achievement.

I have written Walden. I have called him. I have gone to his D.C. office and delivered the names of 1,881 of his constituents urging him to support single-payer health care. I ask readers to join this plea. Urge him to co-sponsor HR 676, our best hope for providing better care to more people for less money.

On Thursday, the House sent a horrendous bill to the Senate, but like a boomerang it will likely be back on Walden's desk. Greg can lead the charge toward better health care. Rather than

torture himself and his committee with an endless debate on Obamacare, he can co-sponsor HR 676. He can bring his leadership and influence to a cause that deserves everything he can offer. Every Oregonian and all Americans need health care. Walden can deliver it. Now is the time.

Fuji Kreider, of La Grande, is a former community health administrator. She currently works as a leadership and organizational consultant in Oregon and developing countries abroad. My Voice columns should be 500-700 words. Submissions should include a portrait-type photograph of the author. Authors also should include their full name, age, occupation and relevant organizational memberships.