



February 27, 2019

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), I strongly urge you to cosponsor Representative Pramila Jayapal's recently introduced Medicare for All Act of 2019, H.R. 1384.

While the Affordable Care Act has been successful in providing access to millions of previously uninsured Americans, an estimated 29 million people in this country remain without health insurance. For decades the IAM has strongly supported a single-payer, universal healthcare system as the best, most efficient way to ensure access to healthcare for all Americans. It is our view that healthcare is a fundamental human right, and until we guarantee comprehensive healthcare to all, our work is not complete.

Leading healthcare analysts estimate that per capita healthcare spending in the United States is approaching \$10,000 per year. This is more than twice the average per capita healthcare spending of other developed nations. Yet despite our high level of spending, the United States ranks near the bottom in terms of life expectancy and other healthcare outcomes when compared to other developed nations. Not only does our current system fail to deliver world-class healthcare to our citizens, but it places U.S. employers at a distinct competitive disadvantage in global markets when pitted against companies in countries with national health care systems that are not saddled with the burden of expensive employer sponsored healthcare plans.

The exorbitant cost of healthcare in the United States also creates major challenges for our Machinists Union members at the collective bargaining table. At nearly every negotiation we enter, the company informs our members that the burden of rising healthcare costs are eating up a larger and larger portion of our total compensation. These companies claim that they can no longer afford to make substantial improvements in wages, retirement, and other benefits due to the magnitude of healthcare cost increases. Instead they are shifting these rising healthcare costs on to our members in the form of higher employee share of premiums, deductibles, and other out of pocket costs; putting countless families just one medical emergency away from serious financial hardship.

Much of the inflated healthcare spending in the United States is due to the inefficiency and profit motivated incentives built into our fragmented healthcare system. The Medicare for All Act would create a single-payer healthcare system that improves and expands the already existing Medicare program to all U.S. residents. It would allow for real cost controls through negotiated fee schedules and bulk purchasing. It would eliminate much of the inefficiency and complication inherent to our current system, and it would replace the current profit-seeking incentives with the incentive to simply provide quality, efficient healthcare.

A single-payer system, as in enhanced and expanded Medicare for All Act, is the only affordable way to guarantee quality health care for all Americans. I urge you to support smart, comprehensive, and humane healthcare policy by signing on as a co-sponsor to H.R. 1384.

For more information, please contact IAM Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at (301)967-4575 or hsolomon@iamaw.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Martinez, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circle above the 'i' in "Jr.".

Robert Martinez, Jr.
International President