

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2017/03/24/epic-go-p-failure-dems-urged-go-bold-medicare-all> Americans rallied against the GOP to defend their right to healthcare, Democrats are being urged to seize on the moment

by [Lauren McCauley, staff writer](#) [Common Dreams](#)

Friday 24 2019 _ [77](#) [Comments](#)



Physicians for National Health Program president Dr. Carol Paris said Friday's failure by the GOP to pass their "slash and burn" healthcare bill "presents a unique opportunity to move beyond" a profit-based system.

With the Republican attempt to replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) going down in flames Friday as Americans rallied to defend their right to healthcare, Democrats are being urged, both by experts and constituents, to seize on the moment and counter with a plan that will truly provide coverage for all.

Uproar over the GOP's American Health Care Act (AHCA), which was estimated to strip 24 million people of their healthcare by 2026, prompted a political firestorm as it [drove](#) voters across the nation to town halls and local legislative offices to demand that House Republicans vote against the bill.

After the White House [called](#) on House Speaker Paul Ryan (Wis.) to withdraw Friday's scheduled vote (after an [aggressive lobby effort](#) on the part of both President Donald Trump and Ryan), many are looking to what happens next.

Though the Republican narrative that Obamacare is "imploding" has been proven to be [an unfounded talking point](#)

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The Week

With Epic GOP Failure, Dems Urged to Go Bold with Medicare-for-All

Posted by Joan Russow

Saturday, 25 March 2017 09:08 - Last Updated Saturday, 25 March 2017 10:23

's Ryan Cooper

[argued](#)

Friday that Democrats "shouldn't sit idly by and wait for Republicans to slowly bleed Obamacare to death by other means."

"They need a counter-offer," Cooper writes, "one that's more compelling than the creaky status quo. They need a single-payer, Medicare-for-All plan."

Similarly, RoseAnn DeMoro, executive director of National Nurses United (NNU), told *Common Dreams*

that ultimately Democrats "are fighting for an unacceptable status quo," noting that a private insurance market will always prove to be "unaffordable."

In a press statement she expanded on this idea:

Many of the criticisms of the ACA are, in fact valid. For all the improvements under the ACA, primarily the expansion of Medicaid and crackdown on some insurance abuses, the ACA still left 28 million without health coverage, and millions more struggling with un-payable medical bills and escalating out of pocket costs.

Where the Democrats too fell short was their failure in drafting the ACA to refute the underlying source of the health care crisis in the first place, the contradiction between a health care system that should be based on patient need and the public health and well being, and the insatiable demand of health care corporations for profits first.

Dr. Carol Paris, president of Physicians for National Health Program (PNHP), which has long-advocated for single-payer system, [said](#) Friday's failure by the Republican Party to pass their "slash and burn" healthcare bill "presents a unique opportunity to move beyond" a profit-based system.

Though Paris acknowledged the GOP plan would have "pushed millions more Americans off

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their health insurance, sending the rates of medical bankruptcy and preventable deaths skyrocketing," she said the shortcomings of the ACA should not be ignored.

"The ACA left 29 million Americans uninsured and channeled billions of taxpayer dollars to a patchwork of wasteful private insurers, each one skimming off its own share of administrative costs and profit that should have been spent on patient care," Dr. Paris noted. "Let's clear the drawing board—it's time to adopt a simple, commonsense approach to national health care."

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—Dr. Carol Paris, Physicians for National Health Program

Pointing to the collapse of the GOP's attempt at reform, DeMoro says it's clear their party has no viable pathway towards a solution. "The Republicans are ideologically split it appears," she said. "Trump is trying to maintain that everyone should have healthcare and the cost should go down—that solution, and the only possible solution is Medicare-for-All."

In a Friday press statement, Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL) [echoed](#) this call. "We have known for years that the only true healthcare reform that will work is a single-payer system where we take national responsibility for the health of our nation," he said. "Now that this vote is over, I hope we can return to a serious and sensible discussion of strengthening our healthcare system and the improving the health of all Americans."

In addition to Medicare-for-All being "quite clearly the best universal health-care policy option for the United States," *The Week's* Cooper also observed that "Obamacare did not finish the job of achieving universal health care, and this is a good chance to move the ball forward."

The AHCA, Cooper continues, "is [extraordinarily unpopular](#) because it takes coverage and subsidies away from people, and a

[majority believe](#)

that it should be the government's responsibility to make sure everyone is covered.

Fundamentally, Medicare is very popular, a fact only partially covered up by generations of red-baiting and

[duplicitous austerian propaganda](#)

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Further, he notes that "it also makes an excellent organizing signpost. Medicare-for-All is simple, easy to understand, and hard to argue against or distort."

The math works out too. Dr. David Himmelstein and Dr. Steffie Woolhandler, both of whom are closely associated with PNHP, published an [analysis](#) this week which found that replacing the ACA "with a universal, single-payer health system, along the lines of the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act, H.R. 676, would provide immediate coverage to the 26 million Americans who are currently uninsured, saving at least 20,984 lives in year one."

This is in contrast to the Congressional Budget Office estimate that as many as 24 million people would lose health coverage by 2026 under the AHCA.

Responding to Friday's developments, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) called the failure of the AHCA a "great victory," but said that lawmakers' work would not be complete until healthcare was guaranteed "to all people as a right":

Contrary to Republican orthodoxy, many of Trump's blue collar supporters voted for him [specifically because](#) he [promised](#) to "take care of everybody." Speaking with some of those voters in West Virginia recently, Sanders [found](#) that many do believe that healthcare should be guaranteed as a human right.

Sanders, who made Medicare-for-All a key plank of his 2016 presidential campaign, [said](#) recently that the president's supporters "are catching on that Trump lied."

Robert Frank, an economics professor at the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University, [argued](#) in a *New York Times* op-ed Friday that the president could preserve

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the floundering effort to replace Obamacare while making good on his campaign promises by getting behind a Medicare-for-All, or single payer, healthcare plan.

Trump should use his "political leverage...to jettison the traditional Republican approach in favor of a form of the single-payer health care that most other countries use."

Taking to social media after the cancelled House vote on Friday, U.S. voters showed there's a real hunger for such a solution:

comment by joan russow

□ **Health care not warfare**

The US should implement the rcognition in 1976

to reaffirm the commitment at habitat I: "The waste and misuse of resources in war and armaments should be prevented. All countries should make a firm commitment to promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. Part of the resources thus released should be utilized so as to achieve a better quality of life for humanity and particularly the peoples of developing countries" (II, 12 Habitat 1);

and move from militarized security to common security

"True security exists when all are secure, through "common security" (Olaf Palme, 1982) whose objectives could be extended to include but not limited to the following:

(i) to achieve a state of peace, and disarmament; through reallocation of military expenses and delegitimization of war; (ii) to promote and fully guarantee respect for human rights including labour rights, civil and political rights, indigenous rights, social and cultural rights – right to food, to housing, to safe drinking water and sanitation, right to education and right to universally accessible not for profit health care system; (iii) to ensure the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the respect for the inherent worth of nature beyond human purpose, to reduce the ecological footprint and to move away from the current model of unsustainable and excessive overconsumption (iv) to enable socially

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