

Personal Tragedies Show Need for Health Care Reform: Video of "Congressional Send-Off Rally" in L.A.

**An OpEdNews.com Article, a My.BarackObama.com Blog Entry, and
An E-Mail to Progressive Activists**

September 8, 2009

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On Thursday, September 3, [Organizing for America](#), the Democratic National Committee group calling upon the 13 million Americans who supported Barack Obama for president, and [Health Care for America NOW!](#), the national grassroots advocacy group, organized "Congressional Send-Off Rallies" nationwide, including in historic "[Cornfield Park](#)," in downtown Los Angeles, where reporting for [OpEdNews](#), I videotaped the event. I have edited and posted video clips at YouTube (Click on the link above or in the bullet points below to view the clips).

Some of the event's speakers were people who have suffered terrible personal tragedies due to failures of our current health care system:

- [Maria, a college student](#), whose working-class father, without insurance, missed medical appointments that he could not afford but that would have saved his life from cancer.
- [Odetta, a private school teacher](#), whose health insurance does not cover her husband, an independent contractor, and who cannot afford to cover her children, left at risk because of budget cuts to the Healthy Families program.
- [Veronica De La Cruz, former CNN news anchor](#), whose family went bankrupt as they tried for five years to cut through red tape in order to get a heart transplant for her brother, Eric, only to find that after getting the OK—as well as raising a million dollars for "supplemental" self-coverage, as through the help of Nine Inch Nails—they were just too late.

As Veronica told of how the CEOs of health insurance companies make millions of dollars a year and how their companies make billions, up hundreds of percent in this decade alone, the crowd yelled, "Blood money!" and "Outrage!"—the latter a chant begun earlier in the evening by

one of the political leaders on hand, Rep. Jane Harman.

- [Rep. Harman](#) (D-Torrance) listed the deficiencies in the current health care system and called every last one an "outrage." And she in no uncertain terms endorsed the public option, which surprised some in the crowd, given Rep. Harman's reputation as a "Blue Dog" Democrat.
- [Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky](#) challenged us to "go to the mountain" — as we have for education and voting rights — to ensure health care for all, which he called a fundamental human right.
- [L.A. City Councilwoman Janice Hahn](#) declared that doctors, not insurance companies, should make health care decisions and that patients should not have to beg for care. She told of her work to get health care insurance for airport workers at LAX.
- [Staffmembers of Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard \(D-Los Angeles\), Rep. Linda Sánchez \(D-Cerritos\), and Rep. Brad Sherman \(D-Sherman Oaks\)](#) voiced the congressional representatives' support for health care reform, to address health care inequalities, as for individuals and small businesses.

Again, take a look at [these and other clips](#)—as of [a public health nurse](#) and [a public health doctor](#)—to see for yourself grassroots democracy in action on this literally life-and-death issue. In particular, note that by calling the HCAN hotline, at 1-877-264-4226, you can leave a

message for your congressional representative, telling them to "get the job done!"

Coming just days before President Obama's speech before a historic joint session of Congress about his health care reform efforts—under intense fire, [including outrageous lies](#), from the Right—these rallies were held nationwide to send a message to Congress and to the nation as a whole that [according to the polls](#), most Americans — unlike [the thugs who disrupted town hall meetings](#) — still support health care reform, including a strong "public option"—that would have saved some of the lives lost by the loved ones of the evening's speakers.

Ever harassed by the Right, it is—as it has always been—the job of progressives to see that America is defined not by the worst in us but by the best in us. This OFA/HCAN "Congressional Send-Off Rally" in L.A. did just that.