

Some of us were disappointed in hearing that Garamendi wasn't putting his hat in the ring for Governor, however, we do believe he will be a shot in the arm for Congress.

We didn't want his message on healthcare reform to be forgotten either.

Please heed his advisement. Enjoy . . . Minerva and Todd Hoover



We Can't Let the Insurance Companies Win this Time

August 17, 2009 - 5:51pm | by John Garamendi

Thousands of people are lined up in front of a sports arena waiting to receive the health care they desperately need from a nonprofit that specializes in treating patients from the developing world. Some of their grateful patients stand outside hours past sunset waiting to be treated. Basic dental work for working mothers, glasses for young children, infections left to linger, procedures delayed because the cost of treatment is too great.

No, I'm not recalling an incident from the years I volunteered for the Peace Corps in rural Ethiopia treating small pox. I'm talking about [the Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corp's weeklong clinic in Inglewood](#), a community near Los Angeles. For the first time in their 25 year history, they are offering their worthy service in a major metropolitan U.S. city. Where did we go wrong?

17 years ago, Bill Clinton ran for president on a pledge to fix our broken health care system. The model he proposed – including universal access, an end to denial of treatment for pre-existing conditions, cost controls for prescription drugs, reductions in administrative overhead, and assistance for small businesses – was largely based on principles I drafted as California's first elected State Insurance Commissioner. President Clinton and Congressional Democrats worked hard to pass health care reform, but we all know how it ultimately turned out. The insurance companies and their well-financed lobbyists scared the public and threw millions of dollars into the coffers of elected officials and organizations willing to spread lies about the important health care improvements proposed. Under President Barack Obama, with Democrats in charge of both houses of Congress, we can't let the insurance companies win again.

I support universal single-payer health care, but I also recognize that is a long term fight. This year, we must stand for a robust public option. The insurance companies are up to their old tricks again, spreading lies and distortions. I know how the insurance industry operates. I regulated them for eight years, creating the most powerful consumer protection agency in the country. Congress needs a leader who understands the complexities of insurance policy, someone ready and able to fight back against the lies.

It's time we stopped incentivizing denial of treatment and started incentivizing quality of treatment. Working families should not have to rely on remote clinics designed for the developing world. I've been involved in this fight for decades. I know the insurance industry, and believe me, they know me. In the debates over health care, my voice will be heard. Together, we can make the Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corp's U.S. presence a remote memory.