SINGLE PAYER DETOURS

THE DETOUR

State "single-payer."

WHY THIS IS A DETOUR

State "single-payer" looks easier to win, but it will not get us to a national plan. Supporters say that once a few key states pass their own plans, the rest of the country will follow. But no state can pay for healthcare for everyone without federal money, and no state can replace the federal programs already running inside it. National Improved Medicare for All (bill H.R. 3069 in the United States House of Representatives) is the real fix.

WHY STATE "SINGLE-PAYER" WILL NOT GET US THERE

Every state already has many federal health programs running inside its borders.

1. **Too many payers.** Medicare, Medicaid, the VA, the Indian Health Service, TRICARE, federal employee plans, and the ACA Marketplace are just some of the federal programs that a state must deal with. A state plan must figure out a way to fold federal funds into the state plan.
2. **States need federal money.** States alone cannot afford to pay for healthcare for everyone. They must request special permission (waivers) from Congress to use federal healthcare dollars.
3. **Waivers are risky.** Using Medicare money for a state program needs a vote in Congress first. A federal waiver from Congress is not guaranteed. Granting many Medicare waivers to many states could put Medicare funding at risk for everyone else in the country.
4. **Cross-border workers.** Individuals who live in one state but work in another state might run into problems getting covered. "Single-payer" states will have to figure out a way to handle a flood of residents from non "single-payer" states seeking healthcare.
5. **States must balance budgets.** The federal government does not. It takes a huge effort to pass a state bill, then years to put it in place.

WHAT CHANGES UNDER NATIONAL IMPROVED MEDICARE FOR ALL

- ✓ **One plan for everyone.** One public plan covers every person in the country, in every state, from birth to end of life, no matter where they live.
- ✓ **Real savings.** One payer means far less paperwork and waste, freeing up money to cover everyone.
- ✓ **No waivers, no patchwork.** No need to ask permission or stitch together many federal programs.
- ✓ **Steady funding.** Care is not tied to state budgets that must balance every year.
- ✓ **Everyone in one fight.** State activists have taught the public about single payer for 30 years. Now we need all hands on one national plan.

Learn more: Anne Scheetz, "State 'single-payer' cannot be a route to national single-payer: a review," *Solidarity Now* Substack, Nov. 13, 2026.

THE BOTTOM LINE

State "single-payer" takes years to win, still leaves many payers, and depends on federal permission. It pulls focus from the real goal. National Improved Medicare for All (H.R. 3069) covers everyone, everywhere.

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Questions, comments, or ready to get involved: email us.