Twitter Thread by Ady Barkan



Ady Barkan
@AdyBarkan

I am very late to this #MedicareForAll floor vote debate, but since it is still raging, I'll join the fray by telling you a little story.

In 2019, after I testified at the first ever #MedicareForAll hearing, I got back to Santa Barbara and realized that my own Democratic congressman was not a cosponsor of the bill! So I did some organizing.



We pulled together a ragtag coalition of some old timer health care activists, the local DSA chapter, some college students, a women's political club, and a local elected official. We met in my living room three times to scheme.

We scheduled a meeting with our rep, @RepCarbajal. 25 of us crammed into his office even though his staff said there was only room for 8). We talked, he listened. He talked, we listened. He said he supported a strong public option. He promised to send us questions in writing.

We left, disappointed but eager to win his support. We started planning a rally. We gathered petition signatures at the farmers market and the college housing. His staff sent over 15 really detailed and good questions. We asked the National Nurses Union to help us answer them.

We sent over the answers and scheduled a second meeting. And, as we settled down, expecting a long debate, Rep. Carbajal surprised us. He would cosponsor the bill, he said! https://t.co/BM7NEdLgPM

> I've got some exciting news. @RepCarbajal just told our coalition that he will cosponsor #MedicareForAll!
>
> I am grateful to him for taking this issue so seriously and doing whatever it takes to ensure that in America, health care really is treated as a human right! pic.twitter.com/5O5jZQ3LpS
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> — Ady Barkan (@AdyBarkan) June 28, 2019

Now, I know that it won't always be this easy. Some representatives will require press conferences, protests, civil disobedience, and a primary challenge. Some will never sign on. But this is the work that needs to happen if we want to make real progress.

You want #MedicareForAll? Let's build local coalitions like the Santa Barbara one in 150 districts around the country. The pieces are there. We need to get organized.

My assessment is that a floor vote would not be very helpful right now.

. @AOC is right that a floor vote is no more real or "on the record" than the cosponsor list. Especially with the Senate in Republican control. We know who is willing to publicly support us right now.

Another day of news coverage (especially of a loss) is not going to advance our agenda in a big way. We had an enormous amount of attention and debate about this during the primary.

What we need now is deep organizing to build support and hard district by district pressure for more cosponsors. Sure, a floor vote will be a good leverage point. But we aren't ready for it right now. We haven't done the work.

Plus, a floor vote is not nearly enough. We need structural changes to the House rules and organization that sheandothers are negotiating. We need a more democratic House, where power is distributed more widely.

But, look, this is not a foundational point. It's tactics. It's okay if we disagree. The Squad and @PramilaJayapal are hearing your thoughts, and they will do what they think is best. That is what we elected them to do.

But if you wanna do more than argue on Twitter, then let's work together. Send me a DM with your name, phone number, congressional district and email address. I'll be in touch in the new year. We'll get our floor vote in this coming Congress. And, soon, we'll win it.