

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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Over 24,000 Union Members Participate in August Health Care Events

More Than 150,000 Turn Out for Labor Day Events for Health Care and Workers' Freedom to Bargain

Washington, Sept. 8 – After what started out as a rough August for health care reformers and working families – as disruptive, organized opponents of Pres. Obama showed up in force – union members turned the tide with increased participation at events around the country. In August, over 24,000 union members turned out to more than 400 health care events in all 50 states to call for real health care reform. Union members participated in congressional town halls, rallied, wrote letters, made phone calls, participated in round tables and went door to door to educate their neighbors. Workers also used the tradition of Labor Day to call for passage of health care and labor law reform, with over 150,000 union members turning out for events yesterday and over the weekend.

The increased turn out effort helped to overcome the noisy minority who came to shut down debate and spread myths and lies. Reports e-mailed to the AFL-CIO tell the story of how working families were able to break through the ugly rhetoric and highlight the need for quality, affordable health care.

“There were enough calm people who really did come to hear some answers that the rabble rousers couldn't really take over,” said Jo Anne H. of Salinas, Calif. “All in all, it was a very educational night, and I was happy to realize that my congressman completely supports a healthcare reform that includes a public option.”

“Rep. Braley did a great job of answering the questions while still being civil to some of the people who were only interested in having their turn to talk to the crowd,” said IBEW member John W, from Iowa. “Over all, the event went well. Even though there were people opposing the issue that were in the audience, there was good support in the crowd.”

“In general, it was a good meeting,” said Nick R. of Palisades Park, NJ. “Congressman Rothman had the opportunity both to hear from his constituents and to explain his positions on health care reform. The two organized anti-reform groups there were not able to disrupt the meeting.”

Others wrote to express frustration with the media's focus on confrontations.

“Since our paper of record didn't bother to report on it, none of this actually happened, said Lori P. from Seattle. “Three thousand people of all ages, races and walks of life didn't crowd into Westlake Park to rally in support of health care reform. Nothing apparently is going to get the media to move from the well-entrenched meme that support for reform is steadily slipping as the public turns against Obama and the Democratic Congress... not even a show of force by the public itself.”

Union members turnout for health care reform:

- More than 24,000 union members attended more than 400 health care events in all 50 states in the month of August alone.
- Union families have made close to 200,000 phone calls and written over 250,000 letters this year to senators and representatives about health care and workers' freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life.
- This Labor Day weekend, over 150,000 union members pushed for health care reform and the Employee Free Choice Act at celebrations around the country.

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The IATSE is proud of the participation demonstrated by all IA locals in the states of:
California, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington

A link to a full report of state by state activity is available here:

http://www.aflcio.org/issues/healthcare/upload/union_hcreform.pdf