

Ray Trudell

First I'd like to say thank you for listening to us talk today I know you listen to a lot of other people but I'd like to tell you why I support healthcare for all under the New York State health First I believe healthcare is a right not a privilege, it shouldn't only be for those that can afford it. I am a retired worker, for the last 17 years that I worked I was a union member of the USW, and I was a union officer for over 16 years. I have been involved in three contract negotiations and you can say that all our concessions that we made were to preserving our health care. The healthcare that we had was the healthcare that many people considered the Cadillac of health care, and for that we made concessions with our wages. The corporation we work for spent years trying to take that healthcare that we had and give us their plan that we absolutely did not want. As with many battles we eventually lost that that Cadillac plan to have it replaced with the companies plan included included a \$4000 deductible family plan. Needless to say this was a burden for all of our members especially for those who had reoccurring health issues. Every year they have to pay a \$4000 deductible on top of their weekly payments for health care plan. The concessions that we made for years to keep our healthcare policy that we had and which we lost were never anything we could make up again, these concessions were made in vain, because in the end all we did was lose them we were never reimburse after the company got what they wanted. I am here to tell you that many of our number is now ration their health care just because of the expense. As we produce more we don't less for it.

This is just part of the reason why I support New York State I'll focus on a couple more reasons. I had experience a long gap in my life between healthcare coverage. As I went into 1990s the wire mill that I was working at closed so I did a series of jobs that had no health care I was self-employed during that time too. And I was always in constant fear of a major health crisis happening. Many times I put off seeing a doctor not knowing if what I had was a minor problem or a major one. I was always concerned because did landscaping I handle a lot of chemicals that I was leery of. I have an irregular heartbeat that I left to fate during that period of time. I also had family members that were living under the same conditions that I went through during the 90. Cancer has been devastating many people and my family is no different. I virtually lost my mother, my brother, my nephew, my sister, three cousins, and an aunt to cancer. Most of the people that I lost in my family to cancer had health insurance and some had very good health insurance at the time. But a couple of them didn't have the greatest health care and my cousin Kathy was one. When she was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer it was two years after we found out her brother, Pat had esophagus cancer which he had been fighting vigorously to be beat. Pat and Kathy died one month the today with cancer, but at least my cousin Pat, was also my best friend had a chance simply because he had insurance. Kathy however didn't have any insurance she didn't go to doctors or get any treatment until she was on stage four. So shortly after we found out that Kathy had cancer she passed away. I don't know how we as a society can allow stuff like this happen.

We hear talk every day about making America great making this country, making this states great. We'll make everything great. But who can answer the question of when we were great, and what made us great. We talk about a past and we romanticize how great it was but I have news for you the past that we dream about today never existed. Let's leave, Leave it to Beaver in the past it's just a fiction of 1960 television. We want to go back to a time that never existed instead of reaching into the future grabbing hold of ideas for the common good and advancing it

. The common good when was the last time you heard that song song? Without this common good, what good are we? So I stand here my heart in my hand asking you our leaders, our representatives to reach out my hand and except New York State healthcare for all. I could stand here and tell you that healthcare for all my saved New York State money but I believe that something smarter than me could do it better than I ever could. I do know that if I were a businessman, a small businessman I would endorse it 100%. I wouldn't have to compete against corporations to try to get workers using health care. And people wouldn't be held hostage for health, could this be a win win?

I used to think why wouldn't corporations not support a national healthcare policy until I was a part of the negotiating committee. That's when I saw how corporations use healthcare as

Ray Trudell

a leverage for everything else. It's my honest belief that healthcare should never be used as a leverage to extract from wages, from benefits and from life. Life is not a bargaining chip.

I look out at all of you knowing that each and everyone of you and your daily events come across people just like the ones here telling their stories. It may be your aunt, It may be a friend. A brother, and sister. It could be a barista where you get your coffee. The cashier when you're checking out your groceries. A fellow worker. But each and everyone of you out there knows someone. Maybe your grandmother couldn't afford to take her medicine this week. It could be your next-door neighbor who didn't go to the doctor because of the co-pay high and had a pay utility bills instead. But you know someone! Just like us you are part of this, and just like us someday, this could be you. I ask you that at some point during the day or the night, or tomorrow, maybe when you're getting ready for work you look into the mirror ask yourself am I ready to do something for the common good. Do I really believe that healthcare should be right or, that it should be left to the luck of the draw. What would happen to me if through circumstances beyond my control was without insurance? What if my child suffered severe injury or a horrible disease during that time. Would I think of healthcare differently than I do now? If the answer to this question is yes then ask yourself why you don't think that way now. Thank you for your time and please look in that mirror and ask those questions.