

**The corporate 'war chest'  
that's spending big  
to control your health care**

*featuring*  
**Jodi Reid, Executive Director**  
California Alliance for Retired Americans



## ***This time on Code WACK!***

**Why did California's latest single payer bill fail** and what can we do about it? **How can the public learn the truth** about how much they could save with unified financing when **deep-pocketed corporations keep lobbying legislators** against it? *What will it take to make Medicare for All a reality once and for all?*

To find out, we spoke to **Jodi Reid**, executive director of [California Alliance for Retired Americans](#), California's largest grassroots senior advocacy organization. She has more than four decades of organizing experience on issues ranging from health care to housing. Jodi represents her organization on the board of [Healthy California Now](#), a single-payer advocacy coalition. *This is the second of a two-part series with Jodi about long-term care and single payer.*

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# WE DISCUSS

## *Why do you think CalCare – California's latest single payer policy bill – was rejected once more?*

"... there are so many reasons why I think it failed. But ultimately I think there's two things.

"One is corporate influence in our elections and in our legislative process... Elected officials from the day they're elected, they're raising money for their next election, wherever that may be. And a lot of the corporate world is opposed to ... eliminating .. healthcare [from the] profit-making world. That would be the ultimate result of a unified financing system or a single-payer system like CalCare proposed. We wouldn't need thousands of different health plans that are competing against one another to get more members so that they can make more profit, you know, and capture more of the healthcare marketplace.

"And also the flip side of that is fear of taxes. I think we have not done a good job of explaining to Californians and Americans why we need taxes and [how] what they're living with ... gets paid for through taxes, whether it's garbage pickup or postal service or police and fire or education. I mean, there's this hatred and fear of taxes and yet how do people think they get their Medicare and Social Security? Like, did that come from the sky? But we all believe those are our *"earned benefits."* Well, they're *"earned"* because we pay taxes into them our whole working life.

"So I think the cost of the system is what gets put out there by the opponents and the fact that to pay for it, everybody's taxes will go up. But what is not talked about obviously is *what is saved* and that you're already in effect paying taxes through premiums and out of pocket costs for health care. And those would be eliminated and in exchange you'd pay one tax that would be less than what you're currently paying out of pocket to cover all of that, without corporate interference." – **Jodi Reid**

## *How do we move forward?*

“Do we do another bill next year? What would it look like? How would it be different? Or ... how do we do more in the public sphere to engage on this issue? We know that if we put this on the ballot, and we have done that before, you know, many, many years ago, the industry that is profiting from our current broken system has been building their war chest for decades and they have unlimited ... dollars to “inform” – quote unquote – the public...misinform the public... scare the public.

“And so we need a very, very well-funded and well-informed population to counter that. We'll never have as much money as they've been able to amass on our backs ... out of our pocketbooks. But we have to figure out a way to do it through using social media and other, you know, less expensive forms of public education to engage the public and kind of inoculate voters from the barrage of misinformation that will clearly come from the insurance industry with unlimited funds.

“So it's a big task, but the thing that makes it easier, and this is sad to say, is that our system is unraveling that even with as much money as we are spending individually and publicly, people are not getting the care they need....

“I mean the system is falling apart. Hospitals are closing, clinics are closing. People are not getting access to care cause the money is going into profits and not into care. And so we can't last much longer in the system that we're living with.” – **Jodi Reid**

***Gov. Gavin Newsom's Healthy California for All commission found that with unified financing, California could save \$500 billion over the next ten years. Do lawmakers understand this?***

"No. <laugh> *No*. I mean that commission's report has been shared through the legislature, but either they haven't read it, they don't believe it, or they're being harangued by the insurance and corporate folks who are threatening them either with lack of support for their campaigns or efforts to elect somebody else if they don't do their bidding.

"I think we need both a very robust public campaign around a unified finance system and the findings of the report of the Healthy California Commission. But we also need to talk about campaign finance reform. That's a key part of this conversation...

"...Then money needs to go into educating the public. Because the corporations are ... misinforming.

"There's this great tool that's on the [Healthy California Now](#) [website], ... a **calculator** created by the University of California San Francisco and others - that you can ... plug in what you're spending now both in premiums and out-of-pocket costs, et cetera. And then, you put in your age and ... then it pops out with how much money you personally would save in a single-payer system. And even, for example, for people on Medicare, they save thousands a year because we are paying for supplements and drugs and copayments, et cetera.

"And if everybody tried that ... they would see it would actually *save me* money. And all this fear about increased taxes could be negated." - **Jodi Reid**

## Helpful Links

[California Alliance for Retired Americans](#)

[Medicare for All Savings Calculator](#), *Healthy California Now*

[Federal Lobbying, Sector: Health \(2024\), Open Secrets](#)

[Key Design Considerations for a Unified Health Care Financing System in California](#), California Health & Human Services: *Healthy California for All Commission*

[How California is trying to establish a single-payer healthcare system](#), *Healthcare Brew*

[California law signals on-going push for single-payer system](#), *Roll Call*

## Episode Transcript

Read the [episode transcript](#).

## Guest Biography - Jodi Reid

**Jodi Reid** has been the Executive Director and Northern California Organizer of the [California Alliance for Retired Americans \(CARA\)](#) since August of 2003. CARA is California's largest, grassroots senior advocacy organization working to improve the quality of life for seniors. CARA represents over 1 million seniors through their 300+ affiliated organizations.

With 18 local California chapters (called CATS - *CARA Action Teams*), CARA is the state affiliate of the 3 million member national [Alliance for Retired Americans](#) (ARA). There are 39 states with an ARA affiliate.

Prior to working with CARA, Ms. Reid has worked with senior activists on housing and health issues at Mercy Housing, the Housing Rights Committee, Health Access California, and many other advocacy groups for over 35 years. She was the founding director of the San Francisco Senior Action Network, where she worked for 6 years and was the Director of Metro Seniors in Action in Chicago for 3 years.

Jodi has over 35 years of experience working with direct action advocacy issues – and has trained hundreds of senior activists/advocates to engage in local, state, and national issues.

## Get Involved / Take Action

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**[Join Healthy California Now](#) *- a coalition working toward a California single-payer system. Individual and organizational memberships available***