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# **THE HEART**

## **in Health Care Reform**

Reflections on

The Process and Politics of Health Care Reform

April 2010

**Presented by: Faithful Reform in Health Care**

# Health Care Reform 2010

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After a century of debate, this year we said **NO MORE** to the reality that some people who live in the United States can get the health care they need. . . and some cannot.



**NO  
MORE!**

# Health Care Reform 2010

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## Success!

In 2009, we passed comprehensive reform in the 5 committees of jurisdiction:

- 2 in the Senate
- 3 in the House of Representatives

... all with numerous amendments from both parties!



# Health Care Reform 2010

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## Success!

- ❑ 2 Senate committee bills were combined into 1 Senate bill (H.R. 3590)  
(passed with 60 votes – Dec. 24, 2009)
- ❑ 3 House committee bills were combined into 1 House bill (H.R. 3962)  
(passed with 220 votes – Nov. 7, 2009)

**Both bills passed with hundreds of amendments – from both parties!**

# Health Care Reform 2010

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## Success!

- ❑ **On March 21<sup>st</sup>**, the House approved the Senate bill, getting over the last major hurdle.
- ❑ **On March 23<sup>rd</sup>**, the President signed the bill.



# Health Care Reform 2010

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## Success!

- **The House** amended budget-related portions of the bill with the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act.
- **The Senate** approved the amendments.
- **The final act** was the signing of the reconciliation bill on March 30<sup>th</sup>.



# Health Care Reform 2010

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If all other industrialized democracies can make health care available to all their people, **why has it been so difficult in the United States?**

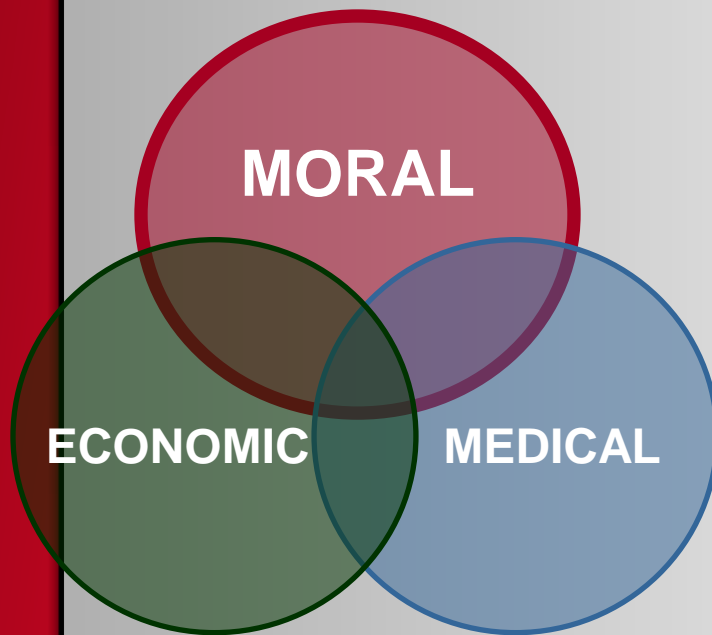
With such an historic & successful legislative outcome, why is there still so much discord?



# The Imperatives for Reform

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The answer to these questions begins with consideration of the imperatives for reform.

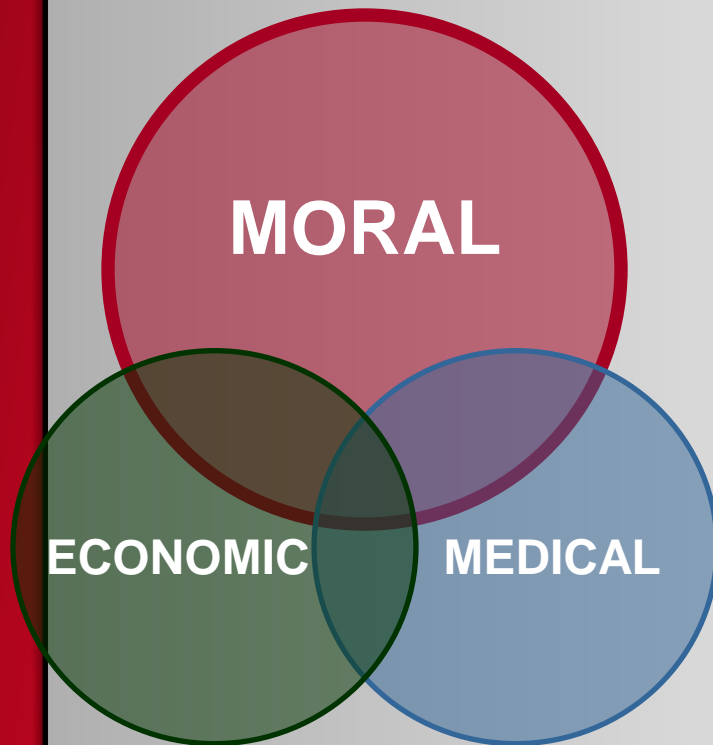


**Medical Imperative:** We've known for years that many people live sicker & die younger in the U.S. health system.

**Economic Imperative:** The escalating cost of health care, along with more bankruptcies and burdens on businesses and governments, seems to have been the catalyst for the current reform effort.

# The Imperatives for Reform

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**Moral Imperative:** The simple, moral & merciful imperative for meeting one another's needs – including needed health care – gives us the foundation for the choices that need to be made & opportunities that need to be addressed in moving health care reform forward.

# Challenges → Opportunities

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**The difficulties** in passing health care reform have mirrored the historic challenges around this issue and have played out as polarizing extremes.

**The path forward** will be dependent upon our ability to engage in dialogue which is grounded in values-based moral consideration.

**The process** helps transform challenges into opportunities.

# Opportunity #1

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## The moral dilemma

Am I my brother's  
or sister's keeper?

Are my brothers &  
sisters on their own?

**OR...**

# Opportunity #1

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## Moral commitment

We have to answer this question once and for all:

Do we want everyone to have needed health care – or not?



# Opportunity #1

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## Moral commitment

With the passage of reform, we made our first legislative commitment to health care for almost everyone. However, the continuing discord suggests that **we have not yet made this moral commitment.**

# Opportunity #1

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## Moral commitment

How we answer the moral question will determine how we address all other challenges and opportunities as we move forward.



# Opportunity #2

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## Agreement on the goal

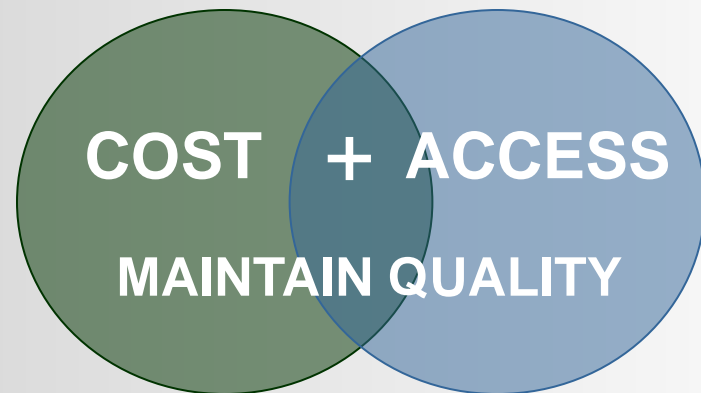
Do we want to...  
improve/guarantee access  
or...  
restrain the growth of costs?

# Opportunity #2

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All other industrialized democracies have found ways to maintain quality while addressing both access and costs...

and so can the United States!



# Opportunity #3

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## **Marketplace or the government?**

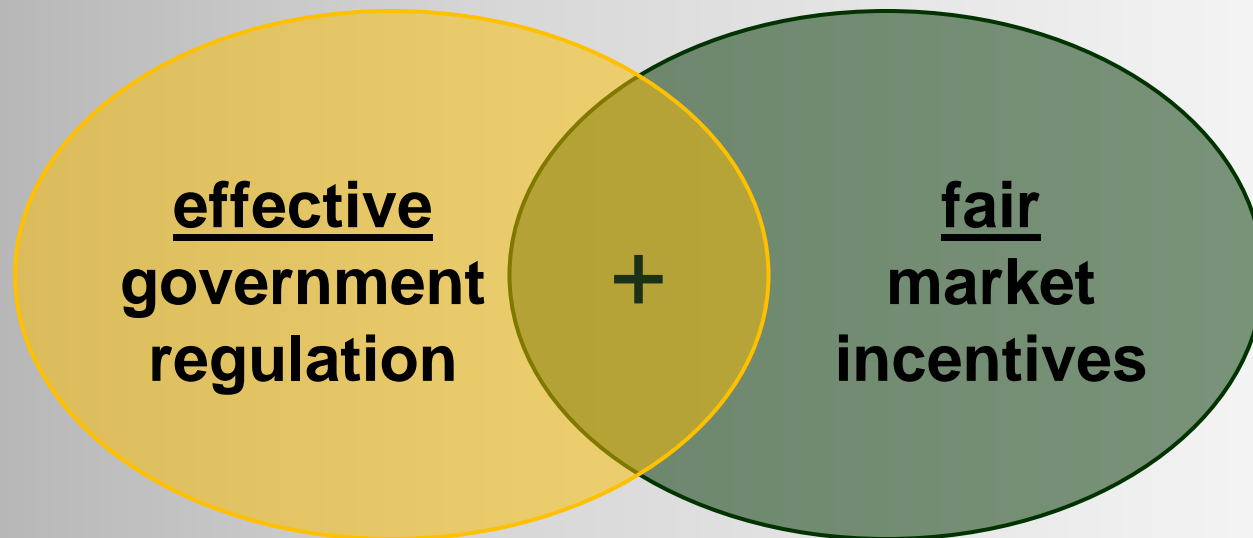
Are human needs better served by markets, individual ownership, competition and profits . . . .

Or by governments and laws that guarantee access and the fair distribution of costs?

# Opportunity #3

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The marketplace + the government:  
We must find a solution with a  
creative mix of . . .

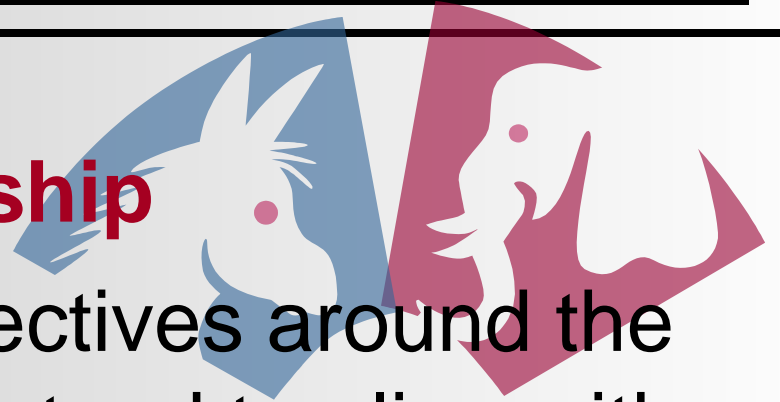


# Opportunity #4

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## Political partisanship

The diverse perspectives around the first 3 opportunities tend to align with the ideologies of the two political parties, and feed the partisanship that has limited the ability of parties to seek common ground for the common good.



# Opportunity #4

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Overcoming political partisanship will depend upon all of us engaging in

**DIALOGUE**

over “my-way-or-no-way” thinking...  
AND upon cultural transformation  
around shared moral values.

**THE KEY? PEOPLE OF FAITH!!!**

# Opportunity #5

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## Economic self-interests of key players

Campaign contributors  
& lobbyists affect:

- how issues are framed
- how bills are written
- which bills get committee hearings
- what goes to the floor for votes
- how regulations are written




# Opportunity #5

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Strong public demands for change, including voices of faith, can:



Promote the common good as a benefit to everyone's self-interest.

Prevent special interests from blocking progress toward reform.

# Our Health Care Future

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“In calling us to partnership in completing creation, and creating a world of justice and peace, God has ennobled humanity to raise above mere biological existence and give into our lives destiny and meaning and purpose... The call to provide that moral witness is a fulfillment of God’s call for us to be partners in shaping this better more hopeful future for all of God’s children.”

Rabbi David Saperstein

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Video, Vision and Voice curriculum

# Our Health Care Future

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## **Social change is a process**

We envision a health care future that affords health, wholeness and human dignity for all.

**But...** we are reminded that social change is always a long process – an evolution during which the public conscience is transformed from acceptance of what is to a commitment to what should be.

# Our Health Care Future

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## Social change is a process

We saw it in the efforts to:

- end child labor.
- give women voting rights.
- enact civil rights for African Americans.
- protect our environment.

And we see it now.

# Our Health Care Future

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## **Social change is a process**

We see it in these days as we consider exactly what shape our health care future will take.

Health care reform is now the law of the land, but it is only the first step in making our vision a reality.

Health care justice still awaits our faithful witness.

# An Invitation

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**You are invited** to join others on this journey into our health care future...

... to **facilitate dialogue** around the shared values that draw us into common purpose on behalf of the common good.

... to **work for the transformation** of hearts and minds to ensure that our health care future truly “bends toward justice.”  
(ML KING, JR.)



# For more information

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