

My name is Tom Bost and I am an intensive care unit specialist.

I had a dream about Ron Rosen last night. I have this dream--a nightmare of carnage--often.

In 2007, one score and three months ago, I saw Ron Rosen after hours in my office as a favor to a long time friend. Mr. Rosen was self employed and didn't have insurance. He paid his taxes, was a new husband and a stepdad: he was just like 800,000 other Coloradans. His blood pressure was 225/125 and he had new onset atrial fibrillation, an irregular heart beat. I told him he needed to be in the hospital, but he told me he couldn't afford it. I got him an appointment with a primary care provider at Denver Health. Three days later he was dead: an intracranial hemorrhage from uncontrolled high blood pressure.

Ron Rosen died because of our broken health care system. He would not have died in Canada, Germany or Taiwan. In any of those countries he would have agreed to be admitted to the hospital because it would not have resulted in crushing debt. He died because in our system one out of every six Americans is allowed to go without healthcare. He euphemistically "fell through the cracks" of our current system. We as a society allow 22,000 Americans like Ron to die EVERY YEAR.

In what other industry is this carnage considered normal? Considered "the price of doing business?" In what other industry do Americans *die* as a result of "free market forces?" We are rightfully outraged by AIG bonuses—where is the outrage over these unnecessary deaths? I see Ron Rosen or someone like him every day and this outrages me: it violates my professional code of ethics and should violate our societal code of ethics. We as a nation, as a society, CHOOSE to have the health care system we have, CHOOSE to allow our own citizens, tax paying, voting Coloradans like Ron Rosen, die.

Colorado's 208 commission did what it was supposed to, evaluating possible solutions. The single payer proposal was by far the most cost effective solution: it would have provided comprehensive coverage for all and DECREASED annual health care spending. Yet the single payer solution was not endorsed by either the 208 Commission or by the Governor. Why not? Ron Rosen's dead because unlike Canada, Germany, Taiwan and every other developed nation, we Coloradans CHOSE to keep our current system. This is not how Colorado should be—this is not the American Dream, it is an uniquely American nightmare.

The healthcare industry is not like other industries. Computer operating system monopolies don't result in people dying. Ponzi schemes like Mr. Madoff's cost people their retirement funds but not their lives. As a society do we ask our fireman to ascertain the homeowner's ability to pay? Do our firemen stop and ask to see your fire insurance card before they brave the flames to save your family inside? We as a society don't allow people to die unnecessarily by fire; why do we allow Americans to die unnecessarily for lack of healthcare?

This bill before you merely proposes to do what every other industrialized nation did years ago. Their legislatures chose to do the right thing and acted in the best interests of their citizens. Last November MLK's dream a reality. I, too, have a dream: my dream is that one day Americans will not live or die based on the content of their wallet, on their ability to pay for healthcare. You can choose to make that dream a reality. Do it for the people that voted for you, the people that asked you to protect their interests.

Let's CHOOSE to place people before profits. Let's end this nightmare we call our current healthcare system. Even though you representatives are not physicians, you have the ability and the power to save lives; save people; Coloradans, like Ron Rosen. I ask you to have the courage to do the right thing and pass Colorado Bill 1273.

---