



Affordable, Accessible, Quality Health Care for ALL

Framing the Debate: Responding to “Nothing Happens In Springfield In An Election Year”

BACKGROUND

Those legislators that want to delay the implementation of health care reform use a variety of reasons for inaction. One of the arguments against enacting reform on the state level this year is that “nothing ever happens in Springfield during an election year.” Our opponents want to reinforce the idea that current legislators won’t want to rock the boat by passing health care reform this year, because it could be too controversial during a time when they are campaigning to retain their seats in the House and Senate.

This argument completely discounts the fact that 79 percent of Illinois voters have said that having quality, affordable, guaranteed health care enacted in Illinois is a top priority for them. It also presumes that the people of Illinois are okay with legislators who ignore the needs of their constituents for another year in order to retain the right to represent those same constituents. It just doesn’t make any sense!

We need to reframe the debate to focus on what they are actually saying to the people of Illinois with this assertion. Focus on the fact that ESPECIALLY during an election year, legislators should be acting to show voters what they stand for. Remind these legislators that the employers of Illinois working families expect work hard every day, week, and year, not just during non-election years. Remind them about the impact of rising health care costs on working families and businesses during these years of legislative inaction, and the positive impact health care reform will provide when enacted. Remind voters that if we told our bosses that every other year, we weren’t going to work too hard, but we still expected to receive a full salary and benefits, that we would soon be out the door. Ask the General Assembly if they feel that health care is a concern that can wait another year for resolution.

BRIDGING/TRANSITIONING TO OUR MESSAGE: REMEMBER: Q = A + 1

In a media interview or Q&A speaking situation, you seize the advantage by addressing the actual question briefly (A) then moving to the point YOU need to make (+1).

At this point in the campaign, our “+1” should be: **We expect our representatives to work for us every year, not just during the years between elections.**

Here are five bridges’ you can use to transition from “A” to “+1”.

- *...but what’s important to US is . . .*
- *There’s that, but again, the BIG issue is . . .*
- *. . . but what’s REALLY important to small businesses and working families is . . .*
- *That’s what I would expect to hear from our critics. But the ISSUE here is . . .*
- *That’s what critics of health care reform always say – and it’s always wrong. The TRUTH is . . .*

A Project of the Campaign for Better Health Care

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