

2009 Issue Campaigns

The Battle for Health Care for America Now!

A major priority for Citizen Action/Illinois (CA/IL) continues to be the Health Care for America Now (HCAN) campaign. HCAN Illinois, and our partner small business coalition, the Illinois Main Street Alliance (IMSA), organized a massive statewide coalition united in support of strong health care legislation that provides all Americans with quality and affordable health care.

In 2009, HCAN and IMSA leaders organized countless meetings, rallies, and press conferences and attended numerous town halls, parades, and debates in Congressional districts across the state. Leaders, members and partner organizations made thousands of calls to Congress in efforts to ensure that real health insurance reform succeed.

CA/IL thanks the members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation, in particular our champions Senator Durbin and Representative Schakowsky, for their tireless efforts in leading the health care bill in Washington D.C. We will continue our efforts to ensure that 2010 will mark a turning point in our country’s 100 year battle to make quality and affordable health care a reality for all Americans.

Fixing Medicare Part D

CA/IL continues to lead the Medicare Education and Advocacy Campaign. In the fall of 2009, the campaign organized three community meetings in Rockford, Joliet and Champaign to educate seniors and service providers on how to shop around for the best Medicare Part D plan and to advocate for legislation to make Part D more affordable. CA/IL distributed thousands of copies of “A Quick Guide for Cautious Consumers.” Visit our website, www.citizenaction-il.org to obtain a copy of the guide.

Creating a Healthy Environment

CA/IL continues to partner with the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago to lead the Illinois Campaign to Clean up Diesel Pollution, a coalition comprised of more than 70 health, environmental, labor, faith and community organizations. The campaign had a major victory when the Cook County Board approved a Green Construction Ordinance that will require all public county construction projects, costing $2 million or more, to use clean fuel and technology that removes up to 90% of dirty soot from their equipment. The campaign also helped secure $31.1 million from the federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality grant to clean up diesel buses, trains, trucks and construction equipment in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Saving Cook County Health Services

CA/IL continues to help lead the Emergency Network to Save Cook County Health Services. The Emergency Network works with the Health & Hospital Systems Board to bring greater community involvement and experienced leadership to the Board’s strategic planning process. The Network opened 2010 by hosting a community forum, “Strengthening the County Health System,” with five candidates for Cook County Board President. The candidates explained their plans to finance and improve the county system and took questions from community members. CA/IL and the other members of the Emergency Network will continue to serve as the public voice for Cook County’s health care system, advocating for adequate revenue and resources to efficiently and compassionately address the community’s health needs.

Consumer Financial Protection

In the fall of 2009, CA/IL joined the Americans for Financial Reform coalition to advocate for passage of the “Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act” - a bill that would provide meaningful consumer protections in order to prevent another economic collapse created by unregulated financial activity. In September, CA/IL brought housing and credit counselors together with local leaders at two consumer financial protection reform round tables. These roundtables were moderated by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation Brent Adams; Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart attended as well. In December after months of strategic organizing, the House passed the bill; the Senate is currently considering the legislation. CA/IL will continue to monitor the progress and will advocate for passage of these important consumer protections.

Economic Recovery

In early 2009, CA/IL organized on behalf of a comprehensive jobs and economic recovery measure to prevent a deepening of the economic crisis. CA/IL also conducted media outreach, public education and coalition building around priorities for the federal budget, including advocacy for investments in health care, clean energy, education, and a more balanced tax code.

Get Involved! Take Action!

Your participation makes a difference! To learn more about our campaigns and get involved, visit our revamped website: www.citizenaction-il.org
reform the regulation of both long and short-term loans in Illinois, which lock consumers into an insurmountable cycle of debt at rates as high as 700% APR. After two years of intense negotiations, the Egan Campaign has been able to secure an agreement with 70% of the small loan industry to support SB 655 Amendment 1. We are now gearing up for a major push for passage of the bill in 2010, which will cap interest rates at a reasonable level, protect consumers from the endless cycle of debt and allow for greater governmental regulation.

**Illinois Cares Rx Expansion**

On October 30, 2009, state lawmakers voted to expand Circuit Breaker benefits for seniors and disabled citizens. CA/IL worked with coalition partners, social service providers and legislators for over two years to pass this important bill. The legislation provides a standard benefit, reduces confusion and provides Medicare beneficiaries with more protection in the ‘Doughnut Hole’ coverage gap. The legislation raises the income limitations for qualification for the Circuit Breaker benefit, which includes the Illinois Cares Rx program, property tax abatement and a license plate discount for seniors and disabled citizens. It also expands the medications available to Illinois Cares Rx enrollees.

**2009 State Legislative Priorities**

**Clean Elections Reform**
In the wake of the Blagojevich impeachment, ethics and elections reforms were on the minds of Illinoisans in early 2009. CA/IL drafted the Lincoln Act, a plan to restore public confidence in government and the political process by allowing qualified candidates to receive public funds instead of being forced to raise money from special interests. Although these reforms didn’t pass in 2009, campaign contribution limits legislation was enacted. CA/IL will continue to advocate for clean elections reforms at the federal level.

**Predatory Lending Reform**
CA/IL continues to lead the Msgr. John Egan Campaign for Payday Loan Reform. The Egan Campaign is working to

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