I'm writing in support of the Task Forces' work in designing a single payer system of universal health care. Experience in other countries has proven to be the most efficient and inexpensive way to deliver health care, which I firmly believe should be the responsibility of any civilized society. I have personal experience with both delivering and receiving care at the VA, a system modeled on one type of single payer.

As confirmed by many studies, the VA leads the nation in many indices of quality and satisfaction at a cost that is less than the private sector due to many efficiencies that cannot be achieved except through an integrated system of care that the profit-driven private sector will never be able to match.

On a personal note, having access to prepaid care with no out-of-pocket expenses may have helped me avoid bankruptcy. When I became unable to practice due to disability, I had not managed to position myself financially for retirement. I went through a series of health problems that would probably have bankrupted me had I been forced to pay co-pays and deductible. even under Medicare, which I only received after thoracic surgery and two subsequent hospitalizations for complications. During the second re-hospitalization I was diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease. Only then did I get 100% VA disability and Social Security, which together would likely have bankrupted me if I were responsible for premiums and out of pocket expenses.

I don't believe that anyone should have to sacrifice their freedom to serve the interests of those who profit from war to earn the right to access quality, comprehensive health care. I didn't offer to put my life on the line for a country that would deny its citizens (including millions of veterans and their families who don't qualify for VA services) heath care. Access to health care is a human rights, as affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which the US is a signatory.