

Submitter: Collin Stackhouse
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB704

I was fortunate enough to attend this past October's State of Reform Conference in downtown Portland. This organization focuses on 'bridging the gap between healthcare and policy', and 'providing a non-partisan, policy agnostic space'.

The words and sentiment that I heard echoed from every keynote speaker, and the leaders of breakout room sessions, was that our system is broken. That's not an exaggeration. Every single presenter I saw at this conference spoke to the challenges of operating within a broken system.

One breakout session I attended was entitled 'Capitol insiders discuss health policy'. I asked those insiders about the work of the Task Force on Universal Healthcare, and about their recommended actions, which include the formation of this Governance Board. The response that I received from a presenter is that there 'isn't the appetite'.

There phrase "there isn't the appetite" has been burned in my mind since hearing it in that session. Every single person that I talk to about our healthcare system agrees that it is broken, but there isn't the appetite for change? We have the most expensive healthcare on the planet, but there isn't the appetite for change? The Task Force delivered a recommendation exactly as the legislature requested, to deal with the state of emergency that is our healthcare system, but there isn't an appetite to implement their recommendations?

A transition to single payer will be challenging, but it can't be more challenging than the most expensive healthcare on the planet, with the worst outcomes. It's going to be an uphill climb, because we are at the bottom. The formation of this Governance Board is a necessary step.