

Ralph Nader Radio Hour Episode 99

Speakers : Steve Skrovan, Ralph Nader, Dr. John Geyman

Intro: From the KPFK studios in Southern, California, It's the Ralph Nader Radio hour.

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio hour. My name is Steve Skrovan along with the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph. How are you doing?

Ralph Nader: Very good. I have turn at Iowa even more intriguing as the campaign.

Steve Skrovan: Yes. I have to tell you, Ralph. I'm sorry to report that David Feldman is not with us again this week. I know he promised he'd be back but he has been in Iowa and New Hampshire doing your project for Hulu with Robert Smigel and Triumph the Insult Comic dog which we've talked about. Apparently, he has not yet recovered for that experience. I believe rumor has it. He is in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber trying to cleanse himself of the toxins he absorbed on the campaign trail. I do want to clarify one thing. There were rumors in Iowa that Chris Christie mistook him for a corndog and literally ate him for breakfast. But I could assure you that's not true. He actually mistook him for a plate of Huevos Rancheros.

Ralph Nader: That's why we call Steve Skrovan a comedian.

Steve Skrovan: Yes. Thank you for laughing, Ralph because it could be very lonely in the radio when you don't hear anybody actually breathing. Thank you for that. I think David is just dealing from a little post-traumatic stress. I know a lot of our loyal listeners are worried but we will update you on Mr. Feldman's status as soon as more information becomes available.

Ralph Nader: He'll be back on like Jeb Bush.

Steve Skrovan: Despite David's absence - and Jeb Bush's for that matter - the show must go on. As usual, we have a great one. In the second half of the show, we're going to get Ralph's take on what happened in Iowa this week. We'll also hear from Russell Mohkiber, the Jimmy Olsen of the corporate crime beat. We're going to dive headlong into our listener question basket. But first, we're going to talk healthcare, specifically Obamacare and how it's working or not working. We're going to do it from a doctor's point of view, which brings us to our first guest.

Dr. John Geyman is Professor Emeritus of family medicine at the University Of Washington School Of Medicine in Seattle, where he served as Chairman of the Department of Family Medicine. He is a family physician with over 25 years in Academic Medicine who has also “walked the walk” and practiced in rural communities for 13 years. He is one of the most published family physicians in the United States with more than 160 journal articles and 10 books to his credit. For two years he served as president of Physicians for a National Health Program, which is an organization of doctors working for comprehensive healthcare in the United States. His latest book, published only a month ago is entitled The Human Face of Obamacare: Promises vs. Reality and What Comes Next. Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio hour, Dr. John Geyman.

Dr. John Geyman: Thank you. I’m glad to be here and honored to be on your program.

Ralph Nader: Welcome, Dr. Geyman. Before we get into your detailed critique of Obamacare our listeners should know that Dr. Geyman has printed and - published rather - over a dozen books on healthcare. He knows what he’s talking about in terms of the economics of healthcare as well as the practice of healthcare. His comments distinguish between healthcare and health insurance. Before we get into the contents of your book, what would be your ideal health insurance system in America? How would it further improve health care?

Dr. John Geyman: We should join with most other advanced countries around the world with a system of universal healthcare, Ralph. We should have national health insurance, single-payer national health insurance as so many advanced countries have one or another variant of, which provides comprehensive benefits, universal access to medical and dental care and other necessary care in a largely not-for-profit system, where the financing is done that way through a progressive system of taxation through which we would all pay - 95% of us - would pay less than we’re paying now for taxes or insurance. But we would get so much more. So, single-payer national health insurance as embodied by a bill that’s been in the House for years H.R. 676, the Conyers Bill, which is always being taken off the table by the medical-industrial complex, corporate people and disinformation on the political process, et cetera. But a majority of Americans had favored such for 50 some years. But the politics of it has prevented it so far.

Ralph Nader: It has the majority of physicians and nurses. They want to practice --

Dr. John Geyman: Exactly.

Ralph Nader: They want to practice healthcare, not bookkeeping, bill collecting, gouging, delayed payments by private insurance companies like Aetna.

Dr. John Geyman: We did a study few years ago of 2,200 plus physicians in all specialties. And an average of 59% across specialties wanted National Health Insurance. It would be so much better for patients, so much better for families, so much better for the physicians and other health professionals. There's a huge bureaucracy that we have to deal with now with 1,300 private insurers or so that just want to limit care. And there's more and more burn out among physicians. They have to deal with all that every day. The practice of medicine has changed dramatically and not for the best.

Ralph Nader: The listeners might want to know that the full Medicare for all, or single-payer the doctor is recommending would save over 40,000 American lives a year. Because according to a peer reviewed study by Dr. Himmelstein and Wallander, who taught at the Harvard Medical school, 45,000 people a year die in the United States because they cannot afford health insurance to get diagnosed and treated in time. Nobody dies for that reason in Canada, Luxembourg, France, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Japan, Taiwan. So, that's one of the benefits. Also, under the plan that you describe, Dr. Geyman, isn't it true that people would have their free choice of doctor and hospital? They wouldn't be in these tight networks ordered to only see certain doctors and certain hospitals.

Dr. John Geyman: Completely. We would have full choice. And there'd be a lot more chance of continuity of care. Right now - with the private insurance thing and through the exchanges, which change every year if you qualify for them - even if you're insured, that can change each year. And these networks have gotten very tight. And insurers can decide whether they'll pay for this or that, and they generally won't pay for out of network care. And as a patient, you're not even sure who's in the network when you try and find out, because the databases are often wrong. Even some docs aren't sure they're in a network either. It's just a crazy system.

Ralph Nader: You have to pay a lot more if by chance unknowing to you, you are treated by a doctor or hospital that's outside the network, right?

Dr. John Geyman: Exactly. It happens all the time. It can be an anesthesiologist, who comes in from out of network for that surgery, or a surgical assistant, another doctor who comes in, who was out of network. There are lots of published reports of how expensive that can be for patients.

Ralph Nader: About a dozen years ago, it was reported that Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, when he was a senator, were both for single-payer. When they came into power, they kept telling us, "It's not practical." So they're going with a horribly corrupt, inefficient, full of paper

work, billing fraud, nightmarish, incomprehensible computerized billings for people to try to figure out, because in their words, they repeat again and again - this is Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama – “It’s not practical to consider.”

Dr. John Geyman: “It’s not politically feasible” is what they say.

Ralph Nader: Right. What does that mean? If the majority of the people, doctors, nurses are all for it, what do they mean when they say it’s “not politically feasible,” when all they’re talking about is 535 men and women in the Congress to make it happen?

Dr. John Geyman: That’s right. And so many have been bought off on both sides of the aisle that went into the genesis of the Affordable Care Act. I had a book a few years ago on how that whole process was hijacked by lobbyists. There were a huge number of lobbyists per Congressperson. And they got their way. The medical-industrial-complex is real. Dr. Arnold Relman - way back in 1980 as editor of the New England Journal of Medicine - coined that term. It is real. And it is giving us a for-profit system that profiteers on the backs of sick people and is unsustainable.

Ralph Nader: You wrote a book in 2010 called Hijacked: The Road to Single-Payer In the Aftermath of Stolen Health Care Reform. I think that’s what you’re referring to. But you also wrote a book called Do Not Resuscitate: Why the Health Insurance Industry Is Dying and How We Must Replace It. That was in 2008. It doesn’t look like it’s dying now. They’re making record profits.

Dr. John Geyman: Well, it is dying if you look at it, because we cannot afford - patients and families can’t, and the government cannot either. The ACA, Affordable Care Act, Obamacare is heavily subsidized by government both at federal and state levels. Anyhow, we can’t afford that. There are no significant price controls in the whole bill and health care is just going out of sight. The backlash is coming. It just can’t be sustained. I think the private insurance industry is dying. Most people don’t realize it, but it is. How will that affect us: Continued escalation of uncontrolled cost, continued decline of employer’s sponsored insurance, less insurance coverage for higher cost, more insecurity over access to healthcare, more corporate lobbying and disinformation as the industry still fights its last ditched battle. And they’re complaining now. The big insurers say, “How can we make enough money?” That’s in the news just in the last week or so. More insurers are upset that they’re not making the profits that their shareholders want. It’s just crazy and won’t last.

Ralph Nader: They're increasing rates for people as of the beginning of 2016. Some of these rate increases are over 30%. You wrote a book in 2006 called *The Privatization of Medicare*. I've noticed Medicare is sort of being captured here and there: Medicare Advantage, all kinds of sale seminars. Elderly people as we speak around the country trying to get him removed from traditional Medicare to corporate captured Medicare advantage. You want to discuss that?

Dr. John Geyman: Yes. That's an increasing problem. More and more Medicare plans are being privatized. More and more Medicaid plans are being privatized. The story is the same every time. It costs more for less services. They're subsidized. This has been shown for years that traditional Medicare - how it started - gives us so much more value than privatized Medicare.

Ralph Nader: I think you might tell our listeners what the administrative costs on the average are companies by Aetna compared to the administrative cost by Medicare.

Dr. John Geyman: The traditional overhead - administrative overhead - at Medicare is one and a half or 2%. The average overhead per private insurers is 18 or 19% or more. They just sucked all kinds of profiteering and administrative bureaucracy costs out of it. They're mainly trying to avoid sicker people. And they have lots of subtle ways under the table where they can avoid them.

Ralph Nader: They have reams of staff denying claims. And they fill floor after floor of Cigna's buildings, Aetna's buildings, United Healthcare's building; then they give their executives huge executive compensation. It's all part of the overhead that you're talking about. Doctor, can you compare Canada with the US? Here's a country north of the border with 34 million people. They look like us. And they have a different system because of a leader years ago in Saskatchewan who broke through. How does an average patient in Canada deal with Healthcare and health insurance compared to the average patient in US?

Dr. John Geyman: Canada has a much better system than we do. It's hard to tell that from how it is discussed by opponents of single-payer in this country. But they enacted a single-payer system, coupled with a private delivery system. It's not socialized medicine up there. It's a single-payer government system, which started in Saskatchewan - as you said - and spread across the country in the different provinces. They have the universal access to healthcare, comprehensive benefits all over the country. Much lower overhead, David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler - as you mentioned earlier - have studied the overhead there and how much better the care is. The Commonwealth Fund out of New York City has done for many years now international studies of 11 or 12 or 13 countries from Western Europe and Scandinavia to Canada and New Zealand, et cetera versus the US. And every time -every study for many years -

they have better quality of care, better outcomes, much lowered cost and better access, and much more efficient. It's a better system despite the critics from here, who demagogue it as socialized medicine, which it is not - that it's government intrusion, which it is not. There's private practice up there.

Ralph Nader: It's public insurance and private delivery of health care. You have your free choice of doctor and hospital. They insure everybody from cradle to grave for 60% of what we pay in our country. And we have 35 million or 40 million people completely uninsured and many more underinsured. Now, why don't the people in our country point to Canada? Why don't they mobilize themselves in each congressional district, use the kind of information in your books, go to websites like singlepayeraction.org and really input to hit on 535 centers and representatives? It shouldn't be all that a big deal. The representatives are in hock to the campaign cash of this industry to be sure. But campaign cash doesn't elect senators and representatives, voters do. Why aren't they immobilized? Why aren't the unions and the consumer co-ops and the colleges and universities and the poverty groups mobilizing on this? It's one of the most critical issues in the country.

Dr. John Geyman: As you all know, Citizens United set us way back; and the political process is not democratic anymore. It's a political question we're asking and huge political obstacles to a grassroots campaign, which is what we need. The majority of the public wants national health insurance. A majority of many health professionals, especially physicians and nurses and others, want the same. It's a political challenge. And it's not being helped by the rhetoric, even among the Democrats now with Hillary Clinton using disingenuous disinformation about, "single-payer would be a tax increase for the middle class." The economist, Gerry Friedman, chairman of Economics at University of Massachusetts, did a big study a couple of years ago, which shows that we would save some 598 billion a year if we go to single-payer. We would negotiate the prices of prescription drugs down to like 58% - like the VA does of what we otherwise pay. It would be a much better system. It can all be done. But the challenge is: even Hillary now is giving us disinformation. Dr. Friedman showed that 95% of Americans - including employers - would pay less for health insurance and healthcare than we do now when we enact Single-Payer National Health Insurance.

Steve Skrovan: Doctor Geyman - if I may break in - Hillary Clinton on the campaign trail, her case is: let's not go through this huge fight that we had to just get Obamacare. Let's improve on Obamacare. Is that possible?

Dr. John Geyman: No. It's really not. It's flawed from the start, because it subsidizes a failing private health insurance industry. You can't really tweak it around the edges. She hasn't come forward with ways of doing it, either. But you start with trying to let the private insurers survive by shifting sicker people to public programs. It's just not a sustainable thing. We have to accept

their profit margins and their business ethic versus a service ethic, and their huge inefficiencies and bureaucracies, and the lack of access through tight networks, and the loss of choice, so no. It was a flawed thing. It was the political result of trying to keep the insurance industry alive and the drug industry away from imported drugs from Canada and any negotiated prices, so no.

Ralph Nader: In fact of the insurance industry and the drug industry supported Obamacare. It was a huge tax per subsidy to get them more customers without any control of their prices. And so it was off to the bank for those big insurance companies, and hospital chains, and drug companies. In your new book just out *The Human Face of Obamacare: Promises vs. Reality and What Comes Next*. Did you send a copy to Bernie Sanders on the campaign trail?

Dr. John Geyman: Yes, I did. Yeah. Of course, he's the most clear and eloquent on this and very knowledgeable and very supportive. He knows exactly what he's talking about. He has it completely right on what we need.

Steve Skrovan: Is he pitching it the right way on the campaign trail? Is he answering the questions in a way that will assure Americans of what you've just told us?

Dr. John Geyman: I think so. He's clear on it. But it's a grassroots struggle, isn't it? It's a political process, because we have to fight against the medical industrial complex and a political establishment that is post Citizens United. And a media - a corporate media - that are largely owned by corporate interests that tends not to publicize single-payer national health insurance very well.

Ralph Nader: You know, I don't want to make excuses for the people, Dr. Geyman. These are - people are hurting. Their relatives, their friends, themselves are often being denied healthcare. They're being gouged. They're being pushed around to less competent hospitals if those hospitals are the only ones in the network. They're being told there's going to be another 20 to 25% increase. They're being told they don't qualify by their income level or they have to report more of this, more of that. In other words, it isn't some complex tax code. It's something they feel, and they just start organizing. Now let me ask you a question. What if, a thousand people surrounded each office of every member of congress back home on a certain day? So, that's 535,000 people, who stopped watching TV and stopped feeling helpless and stopped making excuses for themselves. And they stood around at the same time demanding full Medicare for all and the replacement of the health insurance companies and price controls on drugs. What do you think would happen?

Dr. John Geyman: I think that would be big, dramatic move that would have to be covered by the media. I think it's a great idea.

Ralph Nader: You see, that's what we should be talking about, because everybody says, "Oh, Citizens United. Oh, big money. Oh, 400 drug lobbyists in Congress at a given time."

Dr. John Geyman: Right.

Ralph Nader: The more we focus on these corporate pay masters, the more people get totally discouraged and feel that they're powerless. No, we've got to focus on getting them out, surrounding television stations before the evening news with plaque cards, and surrounding the offices back home where the Senators and representatives are often in federal buildings with big sidewalks. That's really what you've got to do. You've got to start it in Seattle. Would you lead in Seattle?

Dr. John Geyman: We have a very active chapter in Seattle of Physicians for a National Health Program, which is based in Chicago but has chapters all over the country. We have many leaders in Seattle and Western Washington, as around other parts of the country - 20,000 strong actually - that would lead such a thing.

Ralph Nader: In their white coats with the nurses right by their side. Nurses have been picketing - you know, the California Nurses Association. You know them. They've been very aggressive. They tried to get an initiative. One in California years ago for a single payer. They can't get governor Jerry Brown to support them because he said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He doesn't get it either.

Dr. John Geyman: No.

Ralph Nader: It's all kinds of misinformation, but we got to get people in the streets. April is a good start. There's going to be a lot of street action and civil disobedience in Washington D.C. In April, they're going to go up to congressional offices on campaign finance reform. And I urge listeners to go to singlepayeraction.org, which has a lot of good information. Now in the subtitle of your book, The Human Face of Obamacare. You say, "What comes next?" What do you think comes next? Just a worst situation?

Dr. John Geyman: The subtitle is Promises Versus Reality. So, I go through all of that. But at the end of the book, which is up to right now, I compare our three basic reform alternatives. One is to - as you suggested, tweaking the Affordable Care Act – Obamacare - versus if the Republicans gain more power after the elections, their plan - whatever it is and I'll come back to that - versus national health insurance. But if I compare access, choice, quality of care, bureaucracy, universal coverage, accountability and sustainability - which I do in a table. Here is how they are sort out. The Affordable Care Act – Obamacare – access: “restricted.” Republican plans - whatever they are - which would... the health savings accounts and leave it up to the patient to be more discretionary about seeking health care - as if they seek too much - and opening up to the market place etc. Access would be “restricted” with them. National health insurance would be “unrestricted” So let's look a choice: the Affordable Care Act: “restricted.” Republicans: “restricted.” National health insurance: “unrestricted.” Cost containment: “no” for the first two. “Yes” for national health insurance. Quality of care: “unimproved,” “unimproved” for the first two. “Improved” by national health insurance with everyone getting access to care. Bureaucracy: “increased” for both Affordable Care Act and GOP. “Much reduced” with the national health insurance. Universal coverage: “never” with the Affordable Care Act. “Never” with the Republican plan. “Immediately” with National health insurance. Accountability: “limited” for both Affordable Care Act and GOP. “Yes” with National health insurance. Sustainability: “No” with the first two. “Yes” with national health insurance. It's really pretty obvious.

Ralph Nader: This is a very useful graph. Is it online anywhere? It's in your book, The Human Face of Obamacare. But do you have a website, Dr. Geyman?

Dr. John Geyman: I have a website its johngeymanmd.org.

Ralph Nader: That's G-e-y-m-a-n. G-E-Y-M-A N. Johngeymanmd.org, and that chart is right up there so people can rush to their computers and see it.

Dr. John Geyman: There's a lot of things up there; but the chart isn't. And I should do that, one way or another. The book – it will be an e-Book shortly shortly - and it's available in print through Amazon and Create Space and the extended distribution thing. But yeah, I write some blogs for the Huffington Post, and we talk about things there, too.

Ralph Nader: If anybody has questions to ask you we're would they go?

Dr. John Geyman: My website johngeymanmd.org my email is Jgeyman@uw.edu. That's Jgeyman@uw - that stands for the University of Washington.edu.

Ralph Nader: Could you tell our listeners how to reach the organization of 20,000 physicians who agree with you - practicing all over the country - that we have to have a single payer, full Medicare for all everybody in, nobody out. How would they reach that group?

Dr. John Geyman: That's Physicians for a National Health Program based in Chicago, excellent, very helpful website: PNHP.org.

Ralph Nader: All right listeners, we've been talking with Dr. John Geyman, family practitioner for years, teaches at the University of Washington Medical School for years, author of many books on the terrible penalties and costs of our present corrupt and inefficient, denial-ridden health insurance system and is ready to answer your questions and would like you to get more active. He's giving you the websites. Get involved. Get the material. Organize your living rooms, your neighborhood, your community, and focus everything on your senator, two senators and representative, so that your reverberations go all the way to Capitol Hill. And those of us who are on Capitol Hill won't hear members of congress say, "Oh gee, single payer? We don't hear about that from any back home." Thank you very much Dr. John Geyman, author of the brand new book The Human Face of Obamacare: Promises Versus Reality and What Comes Next.

Dr. John Geyman: Yes. Thank you for having me. It was a privilege to be on your program. And you all do so much to develop the grass roots reaction to what we need to do. Thank you for having me.

Ralph Nader: You're welcome, Dr.Geyman.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Dr. John Geyman, author of the Human Face of Obamacare: Promises Versus Reality and What Comes Next. We will post a link to the book on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website. Next, I'm going to get Ralph's take on what happened in Iowa this week. Then, we'll dive into listener questions. But first, let's check in with Russell Mohkiber, holed up at the National Press Club with the latest corporate crime report. Take it away, Russell.

Russell Mohkiber: From the National Press Building in Washington D.C. This is your corporate crime reporter morning minute for Friday February 5th, 2016, I'm Russell Mohkiber. Senator Elizabeth Warren has just released a report titled, "Rigged" Justice. Let's corporate offenders off easy. The report - the first in annual series on enforcement - highlights 20 of the most egregious

civil and criminal cases during the past year in which federal settlements failed to require meaningful accountability to deter future wrong doing and to protect tax payers and families. Warren said that when government regulators and prosecutors fail to pursue big corporations or their executives who violate the law, or when the government lets them off with a slap on the wrist, corporate criminals have free range to operate outside the law. They can game the system, cheat families, rip off taxpayers and even take actions that result in the death of innocent victims - all with no serious consequences. For the corporate crime reporter, I'm Russell Mohkiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you Russell. Welcome back to the Ralph Nader radio hour my name is Steve Skrovan. David Feldman promises, he'll back with us next week. We're going to get to listener questions, but first Ralph, Iowa, Bernie Sanders, virtual tie with Hillary Clinton. What say you?

Ralph Nader: I expected it to be close. It was close. Actually, he would've won by a couple of delegates but in Iowa the rules is so arcane that when there was a dead heat in a caucus - say in a Community Center or church where people go to vote - they flip a coin. And they flipped six coins in six locations and Hillary won every one of them. So she got a few more delegates. Basically, it was a virtual tie. And he's ahead of her in New Hampshire. It's going to be interesting whether she can use the Southern states as a way to beat back the most progressive challenge in many, many decades by a presidential candidate.

Steve Skrovan: It's interesting to me - knowing what I know of you - is that, he's saying all the things you we're saying fifteen years ago, and more people are willing to listen.

Ralph Nader: Not only that, but we're both saying things that millions of people have been saying for years, but they don't get on the radio and TV. And they don't have candidates to vote for. That's why he is doing so well. He's reflecting what people think is fair play is a fair economy and not a rigged system. And Hillary is talking progressive talk because she knows it's very appealing. But her record is one of being very cushy with the big bankers on Wall Street, taking huge amount of money for speeches from trade associations in closed-door meetings with no press allowed, no transcript. I've just written an article for the Concord Monitor, Steve, saying, "Hillary Clinton, tell the people what you told big business secretly." She's got to divulge what she told the National Association of Retailers closed-door, who are paying her \$5,000 a minute for her speech. She's just going to tell us what -

Steve Skrovan: That's more than I get for this show, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. You just got to tell people what she told secretly Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, eBay, Cisco, National Automotive Dealers Association, the Retail Drug Exchange, the Golden Tree Asset Management outfit. I mean, it's amazing how she's getting away with these secret meetings with thousands of corporate officials; and she refuses to tell anybody and the voters what she told them. In fact, Lee Fang, who is the reporter for The Intercept, button-holed her as she was coming out of a town meeting in Manchester, New Hampshire late last month. And he said "Mrs. Clinton, what did you tell Goldman Sachs in those closed door meetings?" She just threw her head back and laughed at him and kept walking. Threw her head back and laughed at him and kept walking. My point is: don't let her get out of New Hampshire, New Hampshire, without demanding that she have her staff go into the files and reveal all these speeches - for \$5,000 a minute - and what she told them behind closed doors.

Steve Skrovan: It's interesting, Ralph, that there's all this stuff about revealing the Benghazi emails. Has Bernie challenged her on that, specifically? "Forget the Benghazi emails. What did you say to Golden Sachs?"

Ralph Nader: It's interesting. He challenged her on getting \$250,000 a speech -which by the way is five times immediate family income a year. But he hasn't gone the next step and said, "Tell us what you told these big bankers, who crashed the economy. Did you sweet-talk them? Did you chide them? Did you assure them? What did you say to them? The people have the right to know." I have no idea why he doesn't say that. Maybe he will in a coming debate. There are going to be a few more debates between her and Bernie.

Steve Skrovan: Right. Now they say that Hillary has a big advantage with Super Delegates. What is a Super Delegate and what super powers do they have? Can they fly? Do they have x ray vision? What does that mean - Super Delegate?

Ralph Nader: Super delegates are elected officials who are Democrats like the senators and representatives and state officials, who were elected on the Democratic Party ticket. And they represent maybe over 20% of the total delegates that go to the Democratic Convention later this year. She's tied up a lot of senators and representatives. They can always change their mind, by the way. Hillary is flawed candidate. Another scandal, another cover up, maybe an FBI inquiry - that could start expanding the huge number of people who don't trust her. Bernie will be there, a clean campaigner, a person who practices what he preaches, a person who calls himself a Democratic Socialist and comes from a traditionally rock-ribbed conservative Republican state called Vermont, whose people love him and keep re electing him with ever bigger majorities. We'll see what happens. But she's counting on the Super Delegates and Southern States, where Bernie is not well known among African Americans and Hispanics, and she Bill Clinton have spend a lot of time in black churches sweet talking minorities and doing the opposite back in Washington. In fact, the African American author, Professor Michelle Alexander, author of the widely heralded book The New Jim Crow, just put on her website a devastating paragraph on everything Bill Clinton did against African Americans, including the notorious welfare reform, pushing the mass incarceration laws in the 1990's. And its important that people realize that you judge candidates by their record, not what they say on the campaign trill.

Ralph Nader: Ralph you've mentioned Democratic Socialism in relation to Bernie Sanders and this is actually a plug for myself. I posted something on the Huffington Post about how I think he should talk about socialism - American style. So, if anybody is interested in that, go look me up on the Huffington Post. It will be there. There is a trigger warning though, the language is quite salty.

Ralph Nader: Listen Steve, people know what socialism is American style. It's called your public power company, your public telephone company, such as they are. Public schools, public highways, public libraries, public drinking water systems, the Tennessee Valley Authority. It's all over the country. And Bernie does not believe in government ownership of the means of production, nationalizing all these big corporations, which is the definition of traditional socialism. He basically wants fairness. He wants fair play. He wants to reduce inequality. And he's saying it everywhere.

Steve Skrovan: Right. Much of what I said in that article I learned from you on this show.

Ralph Nader: I might add. He's a big champion of the Postal Service, which is socialism. And he wants to save it. He wants to protect it from the attacks on it by the privatizers. And that radiates to people all over the country, who don't want their post office branch closed, because of bad policies in Washington against the Postal Service.

Steve Skrovan: Let's just jump over briefly before we get to listener questions to the Republican side. Ted Cruz over Donald Trump with Marco Rubio a strong a strong third. What do you make of that?

Ralph Nader: Well 70% of Cruz's votes are self-described evangelicals. It's interesting they don't go very far. A lot of the caucuses are in churches in Iowa. Can you imagine? They just go to their local church. And he got the vote. He spent endless days in Iowa, compared to Trump and Rubio. He put a lot of money into Iowa. I don't think he's going to get anywhere in the other states, though. I think he's a onetime flash, just the way Santorum was, who won Iowa in 2012 or Mike Huckabee was, who won Iowa in 2008.

Steve Skrovan: It was a bit of a comeuppance for Donald Trump.

Ralph Nader: Yeah but he coasted. He thought he's big media exposure and his big crowds spelled voter turnout. And we know there is a lot of shrinkage between those who come and shout "Trump! Trump! Trump!" and those who actually go to vote. He didn't do all that badly, but I think he was a bit shaken. I'm still waiting for Cruz to call him a "loser," which is one of Trump's favorite words.

Steve Skrovan: Right. Marco Rubio seems to be emerging as the semi-palatable candidate to the Republican establishment, it seems.

Ralph Nader: That's a surprise. I have no idea how he came up so fast. He hadn't spent much time there. People in the Republican establishment keep saying they feel secure with Marco Rubio, who talks about families who live from paycheck to paycheck. Yet, he's against raising the minimum wage. He talks about the burdens of student loans, yet he doesn't want lighten the burden of student loans. He is a consummate, smooth talking hypocrite. You know what I call Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, Steve?

Ralph Nader: What do you call them?

Ralph Nader: "Fidel Castro's Revenge On America."

Steve Skrovan: Yeah. That guy keeps hanging in there. And he keeps sticking it to us. And we've never been able to get rid of him. He's outlasted everybody. My theory - tell me what

you think of this - my theory is if I'm in the Republican Party. I know I don't necessarily have the popular vote because all of my efforts are going to suppressing voters. I'm going to play the Electoral College game. Marco Rubio is from Florida. That is a big swing state. Say he does emerge as the nominee. He picks somebody like John Kasich, who has established a little bit of a name for himself and is from Ohio, another big swing state - that they go that swing state strategy?

Ralph Nader: Definitely. They only survive by working that vestigial Electoral College, where someone can win the popular vote all over America - as Al Gore did by half a million - and lose the Presidency. The strategy of the Republicans is that they go for the red states and they go for the two big swing states, which as you noted, is Ohio with John Kasich as the governor, and Florida where Marco Rubio was the absentee Senator.

Steve Skrovan: Right. Well, let's see if my theory comes through. Let's tackle some listener questions. We're going to try to clear the board here, because we got some time left in the show. And most of these came from the website, Ralph Nader Radio Hour website, where you can submit questions. You can also do that on Ralph's Facebook page, but these are all coming from the website. And this first one we're going to tackle here comes from Kelly McGraw. And she says, "Ralph, if you have been elected president when you ran back in 2000, don't you think you would have faced the same opposition as Obama did from the right wing parties that paralyzed his agenda? How would you have overcome it?"

Ralph Nader: I don't think so. First of all, I would not have done what Obama did, which was compromise his positions with himself before he started adding to his compromising with his opponents. He didn't come out strong the way Ronald Reagan did and got his bills through a Democratically controlled congress in early the 1980s. Secondly, had I become president, it would have reflected a major wave of progressive voters all over the country coming out to the polls. That will signal to the Congress that they better reflect the voters' beliefs, rather than their own campaign treasuries.

Steve Skrovan: That seems to be what Bernie Sanders is saying. He's saying that, "If I'm voted in, I will have a mandate, because the people have spoken." And there will probably be more people coming in on his coattails, who support his policies.

Ralph Nader: Exactly.

Steve Skrovan: Okay. So, our next question comes from Connie Rifenburg. And it's also election oriented. And she writes, "Should Bernie Sanders be elected, would you consider a

position? And what position do you feel you could make a difference in should you be in a White House and why?"

Ralph Nader: The answer to the first question is "no." The second question: I think the probably the most important position besides being President in the President's cabinet that could make a difference is Attorney General, because that deals with the whole rule of law. That deals with the legal advice to the President on military and foreign policy. That deals with the legality of these corporate bailouts. It deals with law enforcement on civil rights, civil liberties. That's a premier position, but I would not be interested in a position in a Sanders' administration. He's got a lot of other good people he can choose.

Steve Skrovan: Right. Anybody who knows your history or saw the documentary, "An Unreasonable Man," knows that back in 1972, that McGovern people came to you and asked if you would be interested in becoming his vice presidential running mate after Thomas Eagleton was not knocked out of the box by the revelations of the shock treatment therapy he had gotten. Then later on when Jimmy Carter was elected, was there any talk of you being in his administration? I know you had a close relationship at the beginning.

Ralph Nader: There was, but I told everybody who was making those kinds of inquiries that I'm a full time citizen working on the government not in the government.

Steve Skrovan: It was working back then?

Ralph Nader: It was working back then. And then it increasingly didn't work as the corporations swarmed over Washington with huge numbers of lobbyists and money and job offers for government officials leaving their positions. It got extremely difficult for citizen groups to make a difference, which is one of the reasons why I ran for president on the Green Party ticket.

Steve Skrovan: Debbie Decharme says, "Hi, Ralph. I'm a millennial that is curious about what actions or options are available to anyone that is interested in being involved in effecting change in this country. I believe the 99% and others would stand behind something if they knew what action to take. Protesting is only doing so much." What do you say to that?

Ralph Nader: Quite simple. The action to date is to form local congress watchdog groups right out of your living room. Start with a letterhead. It would be nice if you had left/right neighbors, supporting certain agendas. And send the letter to your senators or representatives and say,

“Here we go. We’re going to add more and more neighbors, friends, co-workers spreading throughout your electoral districts. The people are coming.” They’re coming for an agenda that gives people a decent economic protection. It gives them consumer protection, environmental protection, has a fair tax system, enforces the laws against corporate crime, holds back on empire which is boomeranging and spreading more enemies against us around the third world. Anybody who wants to get an agenda, as I see it, pick up my book, The Seventeen Solutions. It’s a paperback. It’s by me, Ralph Nader. You’ll see that most of the proposals are supported by a majority of American people. When you start these little congress watchdog groups back home, you will have an agenda that has majority support behind it as tested by polls and other indicators. It’s nothing more, Steve, than spending as much time on being a congress watchdog with other friends and neighbors as millions of people spend on a serious hobby. By that I mean: people on the serious hobby will spend from 200 to 500 hours a year, and they’ll spend from \$200 to \$500 a year. Can we expect 1% of the people to do that for watchdogging congress, which spends 23% of their income and can get them into a whale of trouble? Or can get them into a fair and just society?

Steve Skrovan: But Ralph, there are watchdog groups out there: one that I’m on a board of and you founded: Public Citizen - that has a congress watch division. Isn’t there something all ready in place? And not only there, but other NGOs?

Ralph Nader: It’s not enough. We need about two million people who devote 200 volunteer hours a year, raise enough money for four full time people and office in every congressional district. Congress Watch does a good job from where it is, but as you know, it’s not everywhere in every congressional district organized with voters who really can get the attention of the two senators and representatives. It’s a matter of scale. It’s a matter of location. And it’s a matter of determination that spreads on its own from neighbor to neighbor and from worker to worker.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you for that question, Debbie. We’re going to move on to George Devito. This is actually a more specific, personal question, sounds like. He’s tells us that the New York City Compensation Board judge refused to make a state fund insurance carrier pay me back for a compensation case in the hernia surgery that he had at the Shouldice Hospital in Toronto. And he’s asking for your help. We’ve talked about the Shouldice Hospital in Toronto on a show little while back, where you’ve been, Ralph. So, what advice would you have for Mr. Devito?

Ralph Nader: He went to the best hernia repair hospital in the world, bar none, and probably the lowest cost compared to what he would have to pay in New York State. There are probably rules that if he got the hernia on the job, and he got worker compensation payments that the worker compensation board in New York State wouldn’t go across the border into Canada and pay for his bills, even though it might be cheaper. I suggest that you go to singlepayeraction.org and ask

Russell Mokhiber to look into it for you. It's a call to the authorities in New York so he can give you an answer. But my guess is that they have a rule that they won't pay for out of country services, which should not be an arbitrary rule when it relates to our neighbor in Canada, that does things so well and so much cheaper than is often done in the United States regarding healthcare.

Steve Skrovan: Very good. Good luck with that George. Our next questioner must have been listening to last week's show, when we were talking about credit scores and the credit economy. This is A. Max Opus who says, "In the '60s, gas stations had a credit card and a lower cash price. Lately, I was told that the credit card companies would not allow merchants to charge a lower cash price. Is this not price-fixing?"

Ralph Nader: He has a good point. In fact, the more recent fine print contracts by credit cards with their gasoline station partners has a provision that basically says, "You will not go to another credit card company or you will not give cash discounts." I think that is an antitrust issue. I suggest that Max Opus write to the Federal Trade Commission - Anti-Trust Division - and ask them what's up. And also contact the American Institute of Antitrust here in Washington, a non-profit research group that's well respected. That's the American Institute of Antitrust. It's in the fine print. And I don't think merchants like it one bit; but they don't really have much choice.

Steve Skrovan: Good luck with that Max. Our next questionnaire is Libya West and she wants to talk about labor. "Somehow," she says, "The discussion of the concerns of US workers has been consigned to the category of 'Nativism' without any regard to the legitimacy of the issues that might be raised." And she asked you to please discuss the H-1B program and its effects on the US labor force. Ditto on the affects on immigration, war, globalization, and labor." First of all, what is the H-1B program?

Ralph Nader: It's a national program that would allow 60 to 80,000 people abroad - who have special skills that are needed and not met in the United States - to immigrate and work in the United States. It's being pushed by the hyper-profitable Silicon Valley companies like Cisco, Intel, Google, Facebook, because they said that they don't get enough skilled software code writers, et cetera - which is really not the real reason. The real reason is they wanted the best talent from abroad that they can pay the lowest wages to. And H1B-imported workers constitute a brain drain on these developing countries, like India, Egypt and elsewhere and harm these countries. Now, the Silicon Valley companies want the number to be brought in over 200,000 a year. And fortunately, there's been some resistance to that from both the labor unions and from the White House. But it's very typical that people like Tom Friedman - columnist for the Washington Post - they go around the world telling people to "Enter the new software economy. Innovate. Be entrepreneurs, folks, in Thailand and Vietnam and India and Pakistan and countries

in Africa and South America.” Then he comes back home, and he writes columns saying, “We should give a green card to every graduate student from a foreign country in US universities in Physics or Engineering.” I mean, you can’t have it both ways. We have got to make an issue out of this brain drain. We’re brain-draining nurses from the Philippines, brain-draining doctors from Africa, Pakistan, India, when these countries desperately need these talents. Why are we brain draining them? Because A: we want to pay these people less than they would have to pay Americans. And B: there isn’t enough medical schools and training schools to expand the core of home grown nurses and doctors - especially in family practice – engineers, and software specialists. Having said that, there is still a lot of unemployed skilled software specialists. But Silicon Valley doesn’t want to pay them that much.

Steve Skrovan: Right. I’m going to combine these last two questions, because they’re on the same thing. They’re asking you for books, which we all know you love. The first is from Robert Sudduth who asks, “I’m writing to ask advice about where to start learning about reading Eugene Debs’ work and the history of American Socialism. And Karen McArthur asks, “Is there a list of recommended core titles for civic literacy that should be in all the libraries?”

Ralph Nader: First of all, you can read about Eugene Debs by reading his articles and his books. History books by Eric Foner, the professor of history at Colombia, mentioned the work of Eugene Debs fairly. Second, you can go and subscribe to The Monthly Review, which is a socialist review of many years standing out of New York City. Thirdly, you can read a great book that’s now a legend by a Yale political scientist who is now retired, Charles Lindblom, L-I-N-D-B-L-O-M. His classic book is on politics and markets. It’s called Politics and Markets: The World’s Political Economic System. To show you how relevant it is to your question, his first sentence in the preface is, “Aside from the difference between despotic and libertarian governments, the greatest distinction between one government and another is in the degree to which ‘market’ replaces ‘government’ or ‘government’ replaces ‘market.’” Both Adam Smith and Karl Marx knew this. That’s what the book is about. As far as the other question, I suggest that she go to nader.org and she can get a whole list of books that we’ve written, not just me but my colleagues. That’s a good place to start. For a publication you can get every two weeks, go to The Progressive Populist, which has dozens of syndicated columns of a progressive bent from all over the country. It is a feast of progressive commentary on many issues. And you could subscribe to it by going to The Progressive Populist website.

Steve Skrovan: Not to mention all of the books that we... the authors we interview and talk about on this show.

Ralph Nader: That’s right. Those will make up a good reading list for you. I would also suggest that she read a little book from Harvard University Press by Professor Richard Parker at Harvard Law school is called “Here, The People Rule.”

Steve Skrovan: I hope that answers your questions Robert and Karen. That's our show. Thank you for your questions. Keep them coming either on Ralph's Facebook page or on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website. I want to thank our guest today, Dr. John Geyman, author of *The Human Face of Obamacare: Promises vs. Reality and What Comes Next*. A transcript of this episode will be posted on ralphnaderradiohour.com. For Ralph's weekly blog, go to nader.org. For more from Russell Mokhiber, go to corporatecrimereporter.com. Remember to visit the country's only law museum, the American Museum of Tort Law in Winsted, Connecticut, go to tortmuseum.org. The producers of the Ralph Nader Radio Hour are Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran. Our executive producer is Alan Minsky. Our theme music, "Stand Up, Rise Up," was written and performed by Kemp Harris. We'll talk to you next week, Ralph. What do you say? May we'll have David back.

Ralph Nader: We'll get David on Iowa, New Hampshire. Thank you very much, listeners. Keep active. Keep contacting these websites and become an active citizen and make activism contagious with your friends, neighbors and co-workers.