

Only a few days ago [I posted](#) about the opportunity for communication now that Congress is out of session and I can spend time talking with regular people about health care and the challenge of reforming our system.

But recently, we've seen how a vocal minority, which in some cases may be trained and supported by health insurance industry lobbyists, are pursuing a strategy not merely to have their voices heard but to block others from speaking at all. These unconstructive disruptions have made it counterproductive to hold one of America's oldest democratic traditions – the town hall meeting.

Luckily, our current age of technology allows us to conduct an honest and open conversation online. I am planning a tele-town hall later this month to talk directly with my constituents. My hope is to post the recording once we're done so you can hear what we talked about. I believe that this format will allow all viewpoints to be heard, but in a respectful manner that does not let a minority seek to drown out the supporters of reform.

I hope that those who oppose reform will listen and submit their questions – I am always eager to hear from New Yorkers on this or any issue. Many opponents appear to be misinformed about what reform will accomplish and how we distribute health care under the current system, and these town halls are an opportunity for communication on these issues in both directions.

For example, one infamous refrain by opponents, echoed by many prominent conservatives, is that government should not become involved with Medicare. Medicare is a single payer government health care system, one that is so successful and popular that every conservative on the Energy and Commerce Committee who voted against the America's Affordable Health Choices Act also [voted against repealing Medicare](#) .

The health insurance industry is [spending hundreds of millions of dollars](#) to disrupt the reform we are working towards. Over the past few months, they have spent over one million dollars a day opposing reform. For the money spent by the insurance industry on any one of those days, Medicare [could have provided](#) a year of treatment to over twenty lung cancer patients, or to over forty breast cancer patients. This does not come as a surprise from an industry that pays its CEOs millions while

[revoking coverage from cancer patients](#)

for trivial paperwork mistakes, but its predictability makes it no less outrageous.

It is impossible to tell how many of those who are disrupting recent health care townhall meetings are connected to the insurance industry, but whatever their source, I am disturbed by the increasingly violent tone of the disruptions. I believe that a positive conversation is possible on this issue and it's my goal that once everyone learns about this legislation, we'll have broad support for it when Congress returns in the fall.