



Michael Moore

My Challenge to the Presidential Candidates

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The American government isn't afraid to hand out free health care. Senior citizens get it. Veterans get it. As *SiCKO* shows you, even the detainees at Guantanamo Bay get it.

So, too, do our federal elected officials. It doesn't matter if they are Republicans or Democrats, young or old, healthy or sick -- they are entitled to free, government-provided health insurance. They don't have to worry about being able to pay for medical help -- even if many of their constituents do.

When Senator Sherrod Brown was running for a seat in the House of Representatives over 10 years ago, he saw something wrong with this. He pledged not to accept his free government health care until everyone in the United States had the same luxury. (He's still waiting.)

Brown reasoned that politicians should have the same privileges as those they represent. I know a lot of the Democrats running for President understand this principle. Monday night during their YouTube debate, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Mike Gravel, Dennis Kucinich, Barack Obama, and Bill Richardson all pledged to work for the minimum wage should they be elected president -- to show that they're in touch with the plight of everyday Americans, and to make sure they are personally invested in making sure the minimum wage in this country is a livable one. Good for them.

Now, candidates, how about giving up your health care too? If elected president, you and your family will be entitled to free government health care, courtesy of the fine doctors at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. But nearly 50 million of your constituents will go without any medical care at all -- and 18,000 of them will die during your first year in office simply because they lack health insurance. As the head of the government, how can you take advantage of its health care services, but deny it to so many citizens?

I am calling on each presidential candidate to pledge to refuse their free government health care until every person in this country also has it. I want every candidate who said they'd work for the minimum wage as president to work uninsured, too, until

health care is universal. And I want the other candidates to join them. (Yes, I'm looking at you, too, Republicans. I know you can afford to do it.)

During Monday night's interactive debate, I submitted this exact challenge on [YouTube](#), just like everyone else. CNN didn't choose it -- maybe Dr. Gupta was making the selections? Anyway, I am issuing it here. All candidates should pledge to take whatever health care is available to the least fortunate American. Right now, that's nothing. Hopefully as president, they'll have to make it something.