

Together, we did it! Basic Health saved!

Thanks to Sisters Organize for Survival and our many supporting brothers and friends, the Basic Health Plan survived the state budget process at the same level of funding as last year. As a result, some 69,000 low-income people will continue to receive state-subsidized health insurance!

This is a huge triumph in light of Governor Gregoire's initial statements that she'd be willing

to sacrifice the program entirely. Many other important services were severely hurt by cuts in the new budget.

What made the campaign for Basic Health different? It was the combination of mobilizing in the community, demanding taxes on the wealthy and corporations as the way to solve the budget crisis, supporting the fight for other services, defending state employees,



and unceasing pressure on the legislature.

These powerful lessons will guide the next round of the fight.

How the campaign began

Radical Women initiated the SOS campaign in order to build resistance among those most af-



ected by the economic crisis.

SOS members went door-to-door, asking people what concerned them most. "Health care" was an overwhelming response, so the decision was made to focus on the embattled Basic Health Plan.

The movement kicked off with a "People's Court," where witnesses from the community and the 33 endorsing groups testified on

the urgent need for the publicly funded medical program. The assembly "ruled" that the Governor and legislature had betrayed Washington residents, and set out to prevent further cuts and to restore and expand Basic Health. Participants called for a tax on the wealthy and corporate profits to fund essential programs.

From there, SOS hit the streets to mobilize pressure on Olympia.

Why I'm involved with SOS

Teresa Miller is the kind of person you want in your corner.

A home care worker for 13 years and an activist in SEIU 775, Teresa is passionate about the need for health coverage for low-income people. Both her clients and her co-workers need this safety net.

When Teresa met SOS at a

meeting about national health reform, she

was excited to find people who were actually *doing* something to save Basic Health and other services as well. She's been a stalwart of SOS ever since.

"If you don't get involved and

"You can't be half-hearted. If you are, you'll never achieve anything." —Teresa Miller

participate, you lose your right to complain. And I like to complain!" says Teresa with a laugh.

Written by Helen Gilbert & V. Fowler
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SOS action highlights

Media-grabbing actions kept the issue in the public eye throughout the winter and spring.

Over 3,800 signatures were



delivered to key lawmakers at a "State of Emergency" rally on the Capitol steps on January 12 when the Governor delivered her "State of the State" address. Many campaign supporters and key community leaders spoke on the urgent need for the social safety net in this time of need.

SOS members and allies testified in Olympia at legislative hearings and labor rallies, urging

lawmakers to prevent further cuts and expand Basic Health to cover all uninsured state residents.

SOS call-ins and letters caused two bills proposing a graduated income tax to finally gain a hearing in the Senate — after years of being killed in committee! SOS was there to testify and brought along 18 Evergreen College students who were protesting education cuts and tuition hikes.

What's coming up next? Tax reform initiative campaign

The fight continues: Basic Health is saved for now, but not safe for good, and it's not nearly broad enough to cover all the uninsured people in the state.

SOS will be gathering signatures on the forthcoming initiative to tax the wealthy for health and education. It would also relieve some property and small business taxes. The measure doesn't lift the sales tax, which hurts the

poor the most. But at least it does tax individuals earning more than \$200,000 a year and couples bringing in more than \$400,000 a year. Contact SOS to help with petitioning.

SOS plans on more community mobilizing, more visits to the Capitol, more rallies and protests. Join the fight to defend working and low-income people all over the state!



Thanks to all who helped!

To our 18 endorsers and everyone who signed a petition, made a phone call, attended a rally, lobbied, or spread the word in your community—a **gigantic thank you!** Getting to know you has been a great reward. Everyone has been energized and moralized by working together for what's right. We look forward to getting to know each other even better in our next round of action!



Contribute your time and dollars

■ Add your ideas and energy to SOS! Our next mobilizing meetings are Thurs., May 13 and Thurs., May 27 at 7pm at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98118.

■ Donations are warmly encouraged to cover costs of outreach and organizing materials. Send checks payable to Radical Women, earmarked for SOS, to the address below. Or contribute on-line at www.radicalwomen.org/sos.html. ¡Gracias!

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