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The Health Care America Wants

To the Editor:

David Brooks ("The New Social Contract," column, Sept. 7) dismisses a single-payer health insurance system on the grounds that Americans "will not likely embrace a system that forces them to defer to the central government when it comes to making fundamental health care choices."

Yet the federal government's Medicare program has strong political support.

In 2003, even a conservative Republican president and Congress found it politically advantageous to expand Medicare significantly by adding prescription drug benefits.

Extending Medicare to cover all Americans would strengthen America's economy in three ways.

It would reduce administrative expenses, replace costly emergency room visits for those now lacking insurance with more cost-effective preventive care, and improve the global competitiveness of American manufacturers, who now bear much higher health care costs than do their foreign rivals.

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