FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **SEPTEMBER 9, 2026**

ACCLAIMED ARTIST CHARLIE PARR PULLS NO PUNCHES
ON FORTHRIGHT AND ACERBIC NEW TRACK
"(WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT) UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE"
LISTEN HERE

TRACK APPEARS ON COMPELLING NEW ALBUM *ROOMING HOUSE*
A SEVEN-SONG FOLK OPERA ADDRESSING THE REALITIES
OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY IN AMERICA
OUT OCTOBER 16TH

***"Arguably America's finest living troubadour."* – Songlines (UK)**

***"Expertly-picked resonator guitar and lyrics that puncture the soul."* – NPR**

***"A gritty blend of Delta blues and Depression-era roots music soaked in his hardscrabble voice. It's a sacred realm of folk wisdom and sorrowful vulnerability."* – Rolling Stone**

Nashville, TN – Acclaimed singer, songwriter, and guitarist Charlie Parr has released his acerbic new track "(what's so funny about) Universal Healthcare?" off of his forthcoming album, the socio-economic inspired folk opera, *Rooming House* (out October 16 on Smithsonian Folkways).

Driven by Parr's unpolished, biting spoken-word cadence, "(what's so funny about) Universal Healthcare?" serves as one of the narrative pillars on *Rooming House*. The track dives directly into the stark reality of the album's recurring protagonist who, like too many, is coping with poverty and battling failing health issues without access to medical care.

Parr approaches the subject matter with a razor-sharp, deadpan irony—with touches of grim humor that highlights the absolute absurdity of ordinary people left to fend for themselves by a broken social safety net. "(what's so funny about) Universal Healthcare?" acts as a vital transition point in the album's conceptual storyline, setting the stage for the desperate measures considered in the following track, "Bank Robber," where he realizes he may be better off in jail.

"At this point in the story we learn that our hero isn't just suffering from food poisoning after eating out-of-date coleslaw," says Parr. "Apparently there's something serious going on and he's in a great deal of pain and with no money and no insurance. He turns to his friends for advice and participates in home remedies, internet shenanigans, daydreaming and eventually hatches a plan to rob a bank and get medical care from a prison doctor." Listen to "(what's so funny about) Universal Healthcare" **HERE.**

Rooming House draws listeners into the lives of ordinary people navigating hardship and finding strength within a fragile yet vital sense of community. Set in the Upper Midwest and brought to life through Parr's virtuosic, acoustic, blues-rooted guitar style, *Rooming House* paints an intimate portrait of people searching for dignity in circumstances often beyond their control.

Parr's own experiences, and years spent living in Minneapolis rooming houses, became a catalyst for a larger meditation on economic insecurity in America and the difficult decisions countless people make simply to survive. Those memories inform the detailed settings throughout the album. The characters face impossible choices shaped by poverty, illness, unstable housing, and disappearing social services, yet the album is equally concerned with the quiet compassion found in shared meals, borrowed favors, and small acts of generosity that help people endure.

Read Parr's thoughtful lyrical prose that offers deeper insight into the inspiration behind the full album, HERE.

Rooming House ultimately finds hope in the humanity of its characters. Parr's songwriting shines a light on people who often go unseen. The result is a deeply compassionate work that refuses to look away from struggle while celebrating the resilience found in everyday lives and the communities built when there is nowhere else to turn.

Listen to "(what's so funny about) Universal Healthcare" HERE
Pre-save/pre-order *Rooming House* HERE
For updates, visit www.charlieparr.com

Charlie Parr Tour Dates

October 30 – **Minneapolis, MN** – State Theatre
Nov 4 – **Milwaukee, WI** – Vivarium
Nov 5 – **Green Bay, WI** – Meyer Theatre
Nov 6 – **Berwyn, IL** – FitzGerald's
Nov 7 – **Chatfield, MN** – Chatfield Center for the Arts
Nov 10 – **Nashville, TN** – Exit/In
Nov 11 – **Asheville, NC** – Eulogy
Nov 12 – **Carrboro, NC** – Cat's Cradle Back Room
Nov 13 – **Vienna, VA** – Jammin Java
Nov 14 – **Philadelphia, PA** – MilkBoy
Nov 15 – **Brooklyn, NY** – Union Pool
Nov 18 – **Hamden, CT** – Space Ballroom
Nov 19 – **South Burlington, VT** – Higher Ground Ballroom
Nov 20 – **Toronto, ON** – Horseshoe Tavern
Nov 21 – **Pittsburgh, PA** – Club Cafe
Nov 22 – **Indianapolis, IN** – HI-FI

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