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Seeing but not Believing Obama's Faulty Health Care Plan

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Many of us have been watching President Obama's speeches on health care, and have found his comments appalling and at times, humorous. Some of his most entertaining stand-up was captured in Grand Junction, Colorado, on August 15. (See the full text of his speech at: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2009/08/barack-obama-colorado-healthcare-text.html>). But Obama has regurgitated his talking points at Town Hall Meetings across the country. In the early 1990s, Clinton tried the same scare tactics, screaming that people would die and the economy would fail if health care wasn't reformed. Well, his plan was voted down, and miraculously we all survived!

Obama says things like: "People have been working on this for months now." Seriously? A few months? The idea that this is supposed to comfort me is laughable! This health care plan is the introduction of a system that will radically change health care for everyone by changing availability, affordability, and quality. It wouldn't bother me if Congress spent a few years ensuring that they got this one right. Socialized health care has only created more problems in the UK and Canada (who are warning us against it) and this type of radical change can't be undone overnight.

When countries that have government-run health care are warning us against it, we should probably listen. I grew up with an older brother. He didn't get into too much trouble, but from time to time he would come up with some mischievous adventure that would potentially result in some form of punishment by our parents. Knowing the possible outcomes, I would wait to see my parents' reaction to his acts, before following suit. If he got a spanking, I wasn't willing to do what he did, no matter how great the adventure sounded, because I'd learned from his mistake. We have a great opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others, and we should heed their warnings. (The following video is a warning from a man who is both a citizen and politician in the U.K: <http://www.casttv.com/video/h958dn/glenn-beck-daniel-hannan-mep-warns-america-about-obamacare-fox-news-video> .)

Just to clarify, I know that Obama said that "nobody is talking about government takeover of health care. There's a difference between what we're proposing, which has some government involvement, versus this idea that somehow government is going to take over

everything....” I also know that he said, “... the notion that somehow just by having a public option you have the entire marketplace destroyed is just not borne out by the facts. And in fact, right now you’ve got a lot of private companies who do very well competing against the government. UPS and FedEx are doing a lot better than the post office.” The fact is, those short statements are impregnated with lies and deception.

First, the idea that Obama is not interested in government takeover of health care is false. In 2007 and 2008 he was recorded stating that he’s a proponent of a “single-payer universal healthcare plan.” (See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpAyan1fXCE> ; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-bY92mcOdk>.) Sometimes it is difficult to know a politician’s true motives in initiating legislation. Then, other times, they’ve made it very clear. Obama has made his wishes and intent very clear, he wants a “single-payer” system, and even I know the government is taking over when it institutes a single-payer system.

Second, even Obama states many factors that give the government an upper-hand when competing with private insurers. He said, “It is true that there are certain costs associated with a private business that a government would not have to worry about.... It’s not just, by the way, property taxes; it’s also things like just the cost of capital. In terms of the cost of borrowing, a public option – insurance companies have to have a lot of money on hand and it’s conceivable that a private entity that’s having to pay a certain interest rate for their money would be really undermined if the government is able to get money much cheaper implicitly because Uncle Sam backs this operation.” These factors will enable the government to charge less for its insurance which will push good care and private insurers out of the market. That being considered, the government will still have to pay doctors and hospitals, their operating costs may simply be lower.

Finally, I’m glad Obama brought up the United States Postal Service because in 2004, the Supreme Court of the United States determined that because the United States Postal Service is a part of the federal government, according to federal antitrust laws, it could not be sued. *United States Postal Serv. V. Flamingo Indust. (USA) Ltd.*, 540 U.S. 736 (2004). Additionally, as a military dependent, I’ve heard a number of stories about families who’ve wanted to sue their military doctors, but because the doctors work for the federal government, by law, they could not do so. I typed in “military doctors cannot be sued” in my search engine and a number of shocking articles about the quality of government-provided-care appeared. This should also serve as a warning to us because just as you can’t sue the post office or military doctors, if the federal government runs your insurance program, you will have no legal recourse if you are refused coverage of a drug, treatment, or procedure that should have been covered by your plan. To me, that’s a scary thought.

Whether this health care plan becomes a “co-op,” “public option,” or “single-payer system,” my big question, which nobody has provided an answer for, is: How are we going to pay for this system? My parents always told me that money didn’t grow on trees and I’m pretty sure that, not even the government has a secret garden where it can harvest money. It comes from you and me, from our pockets, from our paychecks. Obama said, “...we will do all of this without adding to our deficit over the next decade...,” but he also said, “It is absolutely true that in order for us to provide help to those who have no insurance at all, that’s going to cost some money. It’s going to cost some money. We can’t do it for free.” On this one point, he was very

clear-this health care plan will cost you and me money. The question that remains is: How will we pay into the system?

Obama has said the “[p]ublic option can only work if they have to collect premiums just like a private insurer...” But, who pays the premiums for those who currently cannot afford insurance? I have a sneaking suspicion that I’m going to get to pay for mine through my premium and I’ll get taxed to pay for John Doe’s too.

Are you screaming, “Stop the presses?” Are you thinking, “No, Obama said he wouldn’t raise taxes to pay for this?” Well, even if that holds true (which is impossible), he also said he would cap the itemized deductions for upper middle class families at “28 percent.” I’m no economist, but I’m pretty sure that if you take away the option to subtract (or itemize deductions) you are in essence, adding (or raising) taxes. Is that really fair? I’m not in that class of persons Obama is planning on taking deductions away from, but I still think that a person who is benevolent should not be penalized for their benevolence. The more one gives, the more he should be able to deduct (in proportion to the gift, obviously).

Thus, premiums, which I currently pay for my insurance, and higher taxes, I mean lower deductions, will, according to Obama, fix the health care problem without increasing our deficit, even though Obama said: “The biggest driver of our deficit and debt is health care?” Now, that makes me curious. Does he really think that “driver” will diminish when the government takes the responsibility for paying for the health care of more Americans?

The UK cannot make government-run health care work; this is obvious based on a number of articles that state hospitals in the UK sacrifice the health of patients in order to meet government-imposed time targets. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/5008442/NHS-targets-may-have-led-to-1200-deaths-in-Mid-Staffordshire.html> Canada can’t make their system work, many people who need specialized care come to America to receive it. And, even Obama acknowledges our government’s inability to effectively manage Medicare. He made a number of references to Medicare, such as, “The deficit will continue to grow because most of it is Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare will go into the red in less than a decade,” and “Medicare in about eight to nine years goes into the red. Somebody mentioned it’s going broke – yes, it is going broke.” So, what he’s telling us is, our government cannot manage providing health care for part of our population, and to fix that, we’re going to give the government the responsibility of providing health care to everyone? Call us crazy, but most Americans would agree that the government should get Medicare under control before adding to its financial problems.

Even considering the financial strain this plan will impose on families across the nation, my biggest fear is that this health care plan will not only take our money, but it will also take our lives. Obama said, “We had a provision in the House bill that would give the option – the option – of somebody getting counseling on end-of-life care or hospice care, and have it reimbursed by Medicare; the option – voluntary – so you’d have more information about how to deal with these situations.” This is an odd interpretation, because the version of the Bill that I read states that those covered by Medicare are to have an “advance care planning consultation” every “5 years” or “more frequently” if the patient has a significant change in his health condition. One of the topics the physician is *required* to cover are “end-of life services.” The Bill specifically states but does not limit the counsel to hospice care. Therefore, in Oregon and Washington where euthanasia is an end-of-life service, it is likely that physicians would be required to inform their

patients about euthanasia. And, sadly, the Amendment for a conscience clause was rejected. So, even those physicians who are morally troubled by the idea of encouraging and assisting their patients with suicidal attempts would be required to comply with the counseling requirements.

Ironically, the National Health System in the UK uses similar language (“end-of-life plan”) to our government’s proposal (“end-of-life care”), when discussing care for their older people. For one older woman in the UK, the end-of-life plan meant a death sentence. After being admitted to the hospital, she was deprived water and nourishment because, according to the hospital, she was dying (and it’s a waste of money to feed someone who is dying). However, when her family members visited her, in spite of threats of reporting the family members to social services, they provided the elderly woman with food and water. The family was later able to get her released from the hospital. On the date the article sharing her experience with national health care was written, the woman celebrated her birthday: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2008/jul/08070205.html>. It is amazing what a little bit of food and water can do for the human body. The potential that the government could attribute a higher value to preserving food than preserving life is shocking.

I know it’s difficult to believe, especially when organizations like AARP support the health care plan. I was confused about that too. I didn’t know much about AARP, except that my grandfather was a member; so, I looked at their web site’s vision, “a society in which everyone ages with dignity and purpose...” The vision sounds great, until you find out that the euthanasia laws that were passed in Oregon and Washington were introduced as a “Death with Dignity Act[s].” With AARP fervently supporting Obama’s health care plan, I’m not convinced that the similarity in the language of AARP’s vision and Washington and Oregon’s euthanasia legislation are a coincidence.

Ignoring taxpayers, the elderly and their families, people who believe in the free market system, and people who tend to believe their British and Canadian friends who warn against government-run health care, Obama said: “The only category of folks who might not like this plan are employers who can afford to provide health insurance to their employees but aren’t doing so...” Well, setting aside the fact that there are a number of Americans, democrat and republican and conservative and liberal, who don’t like this health care plan, small business owners around the country must be asking, who is Obama to say what an employer can afford? Perhaps the employer is using its resources to employ more people (in a market where much of the population is seeking employment), perhaps paying a higher salary in order to allow employees to choose their own insurance plan, or perhaps in the business owner’s professional opinion, he truly does not believe he can afford it. Why can’t we trust these small business owners to do their best by their employees, and trust the employees to object or find other employment if the business owner neglects to do so? Why must the government get involved?

Oh, yes, for the “...46 million people [who] don’t have health insurance...,” or is it the “47 million Americans” that Obama referred to as not having insurance on July 22, 2009? I guess it doesn’t really matter. Both numbers are inflammatory! Of those 47 million people, according to the census, more than 21% are not Americans, over 19% have a household income of over \$75,000 a year, and over 17% of the individuals without insurance earn over \$50,000 a year. Is it really fair for you to pay for the insurance of others who are either not citizens or who have the means of providing their own insurance?

Obama tried to pull at our heart's strings too by saying, "...the work of generations past reminds us of our duty to generations yet to come," and approving the health care plan is "a core ethical and moral obligation." First, he's exorbitantly increased the debt that my posterity will be accountable for, and now he wants to talk about our duty to future generations? Better late than never, I guess. But, this health care plan will not benefit our children and grandchildren, it will deprive them the care they want and need. Second, Obama is not the indicator on my moral compass. And, third, the fact that he is trying to scare and guilt people into joining the dark side that devalues a free market economy and the lives of people (as evidenced by the "end-of-life care" provisions and the House's refusal to adopt an Amendment that would prevent abortion funding through this health care plan) is utterly ridiculous.

The American people should expect more from their representatives, and their representatives should be able to deliver them a plan with more safeguards and less government control. Representatives like Barney Frank should be more willing to answer their constituents' questions, rather than nastily responding (to one citizen who, according to *The Weekly Standard*, was "a Lyndon LaRouche Democrat"), "trying to have a conversation with you would be like trying to argue with a dining room table, I have no interest in doing it." But, then again, I guess I too would dodge questions about the health care plan, especially when the system proposed will not benefit the people of this country. The quality of care will go down, the availability of licensed physicians will go down, and the cost for the average American will likely go up because according to Obama's plan, you not only have to pay your own premium, but you will also be paying for the premiums of others. If there's one thing I learned in economics class, it's that "there's no such thing as a free lunch," somebody will have to pay for it!