

Conservative Review

Issue #107

Kukis Digests and Opines on this Week's News and Views

December 27, 2009

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Too much happened this week! Enjoy...

The cartoons come from:

www.townhall.com/funnies.

If you receive this and you hate it and you don't want to ever read it no matter what...that is fine; email me back and you will be deleted from my list (which is almost at the maximum anyway).

Previous issues are listed and can be accessed here:

<http://kukis.org/page20.html> (their contents are described and each issue is linked to) or here: <http://kukis.org/blog/> (this is the online directory they are in)

I attempt to post a new issue each Sunday by 2 or 3 pm central standard time (I sometimes fail at this attempt).

I try to include factual material only, along with my opinions (it should be clear which is which). I make an attempt to include as much of this week's news as I possibly can. The first set of columns are intentionally designed for a quick read.

I do not accept any advertising nor do I charge for this publication. I write this principally to blow off steam in a nation where its people seemed have collectively lost their minds.

And if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, always remember: **We do not struggle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places** (Eph. 6:12).

This Week's Events

Senate passes massive healthcare bill. The final vote was obtained from Ben Nelson who got Nebraska exempted in perpetuity for all future additional medicaid costs.

A 23-year-old Nigerian man attempted to destroy a Northwest Airlines aircraft on its final approach to Detroit Metropolitan Airport on Christmas Day with a device containing the highly explosive agent PETN (pentaerythritol).

Jane Hamsher and Grover Norquist call for the resignation of Rahm Emanuel. Their letter to Attorney General Eric Holder will be printed [below](#):

There is a story out there that, through back channels, the Saudis have given Israel permission to bomb Iran. This is all related to an under-reported proxy war which is being fought in Yemen, but those participating in this war include the Saudi Arabia, the United States and Iran.

The Copenhagen climate talks will generate more carbon emissions than any previous climate conference, equivalent to the annual output of over half a million Ethiopians.



Quotes of the Week

George Will to Sam Donaldson, who cannot understand why Republicans are such obstructionists about the Senate healthcare legislation: "Let me get this straight—you are asking why Republicans oppose this vastly unpopular bill?"

Senate leader Harry Reid about the Senate healthcare bill: "I don't know if there's a senator who doesn't have something in this bill that's important to them," Reid said of the inducements within this bill to get other Senators to vote for it. "And if they don't have something in it that's important to them, then it's doesn't speak well for them. That's what this legislation is all about."

Liberal Donna Brazil [speaking for the Democratic voter], "How is [this or that Congressional bill] putting food on my table?" which attitude explains the difference between liberals and conservatives.

"7 presidents have tried to get healthcare reform and 7 presidents have failed." White House talking points echoed by White House spokesmen (like Axelrod) and Democratic pundits (Donna Brazil, Bob Eckels).

Obama to Defazio, a Democrat who was not walking the party line: "Don't think we're not keeping score, brother."



The Media Research Center's quote of the year, from Discover Magazine deputy web editor Melissa Lafsky: "Mary Jo wasn't a right-wing talking point or a negative campaign slogan....We don't know how much Kennedy was affected by her death, or what she'd have thought about

arguably being a catalyst for the most successful Senate career in history....[One wonders what] Mary Jo Kopechne would have had to say about Ted's death, and what she'd have thought of the life and career that are being (rightfully) heralded. Who knows - maybe she'd feel it was worth it."

Joe Biden Prophecy Watch

The proxy war being fought in Yemen.

Must-Watch Media

Like most people, I mourned the passing of Tim Russert because, despite his liberal leanings, he still functioned as a newsman and asked tough questions of both Democrats and Republicans. David Gregory, for the most part, has not been able to match Russert's energy; however, this past week, when questioning David Axelrod, Obama spokesman, he went after the truth full force:

<http://newsbusters.org/blogs/noel-sheppard/2009/12/20/david-gregory-healthcare-bills-not-want-obama-campaigned>

I reproduced the [transcript](#) of this in the story section.

Steve Crowder on Detroit (this is fantastic):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hhJ_49leBw
Interview on FoxNews:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqkLLcOfqIY>

Michelle Malkin "ObamaCare is a tipping point in the Democrats' culture of corruption"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uusz42b2qZI>

Eartha Kitt "Santa Baby" Parody "Obama Baby":

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM_rZYQCjwY

Wellpoint CEO is interviewed on Senate Healthcare Bill on cost shifting and rising costs (there is a commercial first):

<http://video.foxbusiness.com/11685013/wellpoint-ceo-health-costs-rise-in-reform/>

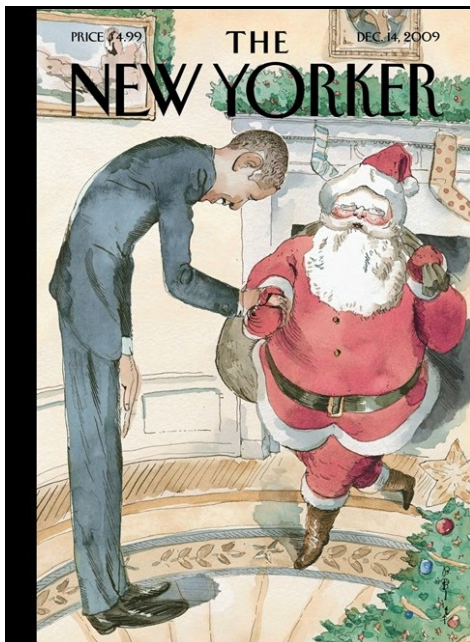
FoxNews, on one of their tighter, more cohesive specials, covers global warming (this is a full hour show, but it is broken down into 6 parts):

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2009/12/21/video-mcintyre-mckittrick-on-fox-news-global-warming-special-mann-chickens-out/>

Proxy war in Yemen (commercial first):

<http://video.foxnews.com/12797649/proxy-war>

A Little Comedy Relief



This is really the cover of New Yorker Magazine.

Short Takes

1) According to Rush, there is a financial hardship exemption to the healthcare mandate; that is, some people, because they are too poor, will not have to buy health insurance. Now, aren't we being sold on the idea that this will provide healthcare insurance for those who cannot afford it? And yet, they have an exemption?

2) Along the same lines, basic, catastrophic healthcare insurance can be given to 20 million (the largest number suggested for those who need insurance but cannot afford it) for a cost of \$40 billion/year. So, what is the rest of this healthcare bill being spent on? If we could just give catastrophic insurance to those who most desperately need it for 5% of what this healthcare bill is going to cost; what are we spending the other 95% of the money on?

3) Speaking of the Senate healthcare bill; you do know it lacks a public option, right? So what is all of this money being spent on?

4) As most of you know, Senator Ben Nelson got his state, Nebraska, out of paying any additional moneys for the increased costs of Medicaid that this healthcare bill will cost the states. A very animated Lindsay Graham compared this to a 70 member Republican majority in the Senate deciding that it would be okay to tax just Democrat states.

5) These points have been made by several this week: if this healthcare bill is so good, why do Senators need to be bribed in order to sign on to it? If this healthcare bill is so good, why do some Senators get their states exempted by portions of this bill?

By the Numbers

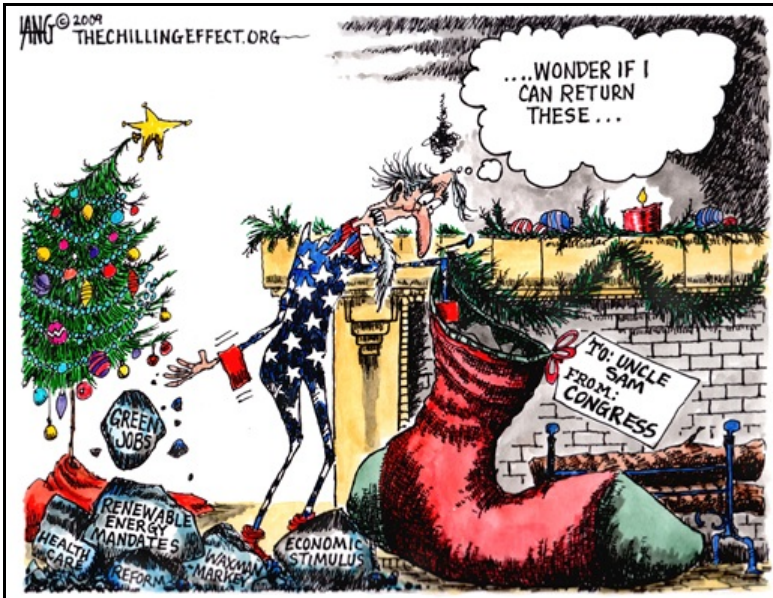
It's worth repeating: it would cost about \$40 billion to insure those 20 million who *cannot* get medical insurance (due to being poor or having a preexisting condition). However, the healthcare bills before the Senate and the House spend 20x that amount of money...where is all of this money going to?

Polling by the Numbers

Wall Street Journal/NBC News:

47% say the president's healthcare plan is

44% think that it would be better to keep the current system



Rasmussen:

30% of voters nationwide believe the \$787-billion economic stimulus plan has helped the economy. 38% believe that the stimulus plan has hurt the economy.

A Little Bias

One of the most fascinating and intentionally ignored stories in the media is the connection between those who believe in man-caused global warming and communism. At Copenhagen, there were many who carried red banners and flags emblazoned with Communist symbols, but try to find a picture of this in any news outlet. Where is NPR (or any other public news outlet), interviewing some of these people who are carrying these communist signs, and asking them, *why are you here at a global warming conference?*

Saturday Night Live Misses

Obama digs through the cushions of the various sofas around the White House in order to find money and to be fiscally responsible. "I just saved the American taxpayer 27 cents, Michelle." I could certainly get gross with what he might find beneath the cushions.

Political Chess

Obama talks about being fiscally responsible, while being the least fiscally responsible US President ever. Here is his chess move—he knows that most of the press will cover him talking about fiscal responsibility, but not about what he has actually done. Furthermore, no alphabet news outlet will put Obama savings up next to his spending.

Yay Democrats!

Not sure if I can say "yay" to any blue dog Democrat. It appears that, no matter what they say, they are still all for spending is much of our money as possible.

Obama-Speak

"After years of irresponsibility [i.e., the Bush administration], we are once again taking responsibility for every dollar we spend the same way families do. It's true that what I've described today will not be enough to get us out of our fiscal mess by itself. We face a deficit that will take some tough decisions in the next year's budget and in years to come to get under control. But these changes will save the American people billions of dollars. And they'll help to put in place a government that's more efficient and effective, that wastes less money on no-bid contracts, that's cutting bureaucracy and harnessing technology, that's more fiscally responsible and that better serve the American taxpayer."



Questions for Obama

These are questions for Obama, Axelrod, or anyone on Obama's cabinet:

Do you understand that saving \$40 billion on improved contracts, in view of your 2009 deficit,

is like me spending \$10,000 too much, and then figuring out how to save \$3?

How much money in your healthcare bill is being spent to provide healthcare insurance for the 30 million who will now be covered? What is the rest of the money being spent on? How many of these will be insured simply because they are being required to be insured?

You Know You're Being Brainwashed if...

You think that this healthcare bill is all about healthcare.

News Before it Happens

Although Obama is inscrutable in some ways (I did not expect to see him continue the Bush policies in Iraq or Afghanistan, but he has); I am not sure how he is going to govern year 2 forward. I am fairly certain that he will push very liberal bills as long as he has a super-majority in the House and Senate, so that means that 2010 will be a lot like 2009. All dramatic and important legislation I believe will continue on a party-line vote (although, the news will report that if even one Republican is conned into voting with the Democrats, they will hail the bill as bipartisan).

Obama and his crew were extremely smart in the campaign; how else could you get someone elected president who barely had the credentials to be elected a Senator? However, they have to know that 2012 will be a rugged year and that they may lose their super-majority position in the House and in the Senate and they might even lose their majority in the House. Do they have a contingent plan? Do they have a way of getting Democrats elected, despite Obama's unpopularity?

Prophecies Fulfilled

Obama pushes fiscal responsibility, depending upon us being unable to sort through the large numbers.

I Was Wrong

I must admit to becoming quite resigned to the idea of so-called healthcare reform being passed; so much so that I assumed the Nancy Pelosi would just swallow the bill that the Senate put together on a very shaky 60 vote super majority. However, it appears now as if they might actually hash out some differences. I still see this bill as passing.

My Most Paranoid Thoughts

Obamacare will pass.

Missing Headlines

Obama's minuscule savings

Proxy War in Yemen

Come, let us reason together....

How to Fix the United States

I ought to make two comments before beginning this set of ideas:

First of all, I entitled this *How to Fix the United States*, despite the fact that I hate the phrase _____ *is broken*, whether that is a reference to the economy, healthcare, Congress, or whatever. I despise that phrase because it is overly simplistic and it appears to give carte blanc to the repairing of whatever is broken to the person making this simplistic observation. Just because

there are problems with this or that aspect of America, does not mean that we need to tear down all that is there and build it up as brand new, usually according to some far-left ideology which has never provided a reasonable solution for anything ever in the history of mankind.

Secondly, I would expect that either the Republican party or some good conservative candidate will come out with a book with this title, or something similar, prior to the 2012 election (e.g., *The Tea Party Solution* or *The Ten Point Platform for American Success*).

There are several assumptions I am going to make: (1) we live in the greatest nation in the history of mankind; and (2) we were founded by men of great character and foresight. Therefore, I do not believe that we need to tear this whole system down and start from scratch; in most cases, that ends up being a Marxist-type solution or a solution which will bring us far more problems than it will solve.

Domestic Policy:

Taxation:

First problem is taxation. We are taxed far too much, and, no matter how much money is collected by the federal government or state governments, those in power will figure out a way to spend more than that.

It is not unusual for your taxes to total over 50% of your income. In fact, since I own several properties, my taxes end up being about 75% of my income. My government takes far more money from me than I actually make.

On the other hand, I know of many people who essentially pay no taxes whatsoever, apart from a meager sales tax and FICA taxes. That is simply unfair.

Should the rich pay higher taxes? Even as a conservative, I can live with that, but there needs to be a clear ceiling.

First of all, and this is going to be quite unpopular, I believe that *everyone* ought to pay taxes, including those who pick up a welfare check, those who work 10 hours a week at McDonald's, on up to Bill Gates and Steven Spielberg. However, there needs to be a strict formulation of the highest taxes being no more than 3x (or even 4x or 5x) what the lowest taxes are. So, if Charlie Brown, high school student and part time employee at Jack-in-the-Box pays 5% federal income tax, then the most that we can charge Tiger Woods is 15–25% (depending upon where we land on the multiple). That way, if we vote to raise or lower taxes, *everyone* then pays higher or lower taxes. That is fair, above board and honest.

When it comes to retirement and/or FICA withholding, and Medicare/Medicaid taxes, we should all pay for this and, as much as possible, pay for our own. If we want to have the biggest hearts in the world and insure that every single person is covered by healthcare, that is fine; let's see it up-front on our weekly or monthly pay stubs. If we want the government to keep aside a retirement plan for us (Social Security), then let's see it clearly in our payments to the government. And whenever these entities begin to go broke, then we need to make hard but common sense decisions: our withholding is increased or the end benefits are reduced (e.g., a higher age for those who can get Social Security or Medicare).

Most people invest their money and that ought to be encouraged; some put it into treasury bonds, some into stocks, some into gold, etc. Investment ought to be encouraged, because this is partially how businesses are built up and expanded. Therefore, we ought to have a very competitive rate for capital gains—even as low as 5%. If there needs to be a distinguishing between

long-term and short-term capital gains, that is fine; and tax the short-term gains at a higher rate (or at the taxpayer's normal rate).

Corporate taxes should be no higher than capital gains taxes.

Right now, one of the problems with our economy is, those who make the jobs are being hit with either high corporate taxes or high income taxes. There needs to be a lower tax rate for those who make a lot of money and for those who make some money via capital gains are those who make our economy work. Small business has been hiring most of our workforce as of late, and these small businesses are disproportionately penalized because they file normal 1040 + C form tax returns. So when a president says he is going to tax those who make over \$250,000, he is really taxing small business for the most part, which reduces the number of jobs which small businesses produce.

Speaking of taxes, our tax code is an absolute mess. Tax breaks and credits are given to one set of people; and a few years later, these things are called tax loopholes. If we could get rid of the IRS and just have a consumption (sales) tax, that would be my preference. However, if that is not possible, then the number of tax breaks needs to be reduced to as few as possible. These write-offs, for the most part, are simply Congress picking winners and losers; or Congress making paybacks to those who have supported them in the past.

Taxing businesses:

There needs to be more flexibility when it comes to depreciation. If a business wants to deduct all of what they invest, then the government ought to let them do it. If a business wants to depreciate, then they ought to be able to depreciate a little more than they spend, as they are depreciating over a period of time. For

instance, anything depreciated for 5 years ought to be depreciated at, say, 110% of value.

I still lean toward a consumption tax only; but if we still have the IRS, it needs to be more business friendly.

Investment vehicles must, ultimately, put money into the hand of some business (and not just into the hand of the business collecting the money); and all investment vehicles needs to be easily explained and understood.

Congressional Spending:

Most people do not mind paying taxes if they believe that their money is being handled responsibly, which describes exactly how Congress does not function today.

Every branch and department of government needs to see an across the board 20% budget reduction the first year; and a 10% budget reduction the second year. Only the military, FBI and CIA would be exempt from these cuts. The Congress or President do not need to micro-manage at this point. The Department of the Interior will now have a budget 20% lower than the previous year, and let them figure it out from there. All Congressmen will see that reduction in their budgets, and they can determine will they lose staff, trips or salary benefits.

Along with this should be a balanced-budget amendment which includes everything except the military. If we run a deficit the size of the military during a difficult time, fine. However, all other spending needs to be reigned in.

There are several departments which have ballooned far beyond where they ought to be. I am not even sure that we need a Department of Agriculture or a Department of Education. Much of these sorts of organizations could stand to see an 80% cut in their budgets.

There are important federal, state and county employees, and there are those which are not all that important. Anytime a state begins to run over-budget, they always threaten to lay off police, teachers and firemen, and then to let the criminals loose out on the streets. Here is what the federal government ought to do, and maybe state governments would follow suit: there are federal workers who know that their job does not really contribute to our country in any meaningful way. All federal workers who can show this and explain it in less than a half page will be fired, given a pension of a half-year's salary, and sent out in the real world to find real employment. Any individual who blew the whistle, so to speak, on his entire department, would get a half year's salary, + \$20,000 for each employee that this whistle blowing ends up taking off the federal employment rolls.

In any case, all federal employees need to take a reduction in pay; and a reduction in hours, if necessary. Because people are living longer, federal employee benefits need to be reduced as well, and held out there until an employee turns 65 or 67 (or whatever). It makes little sense to allow people to retire with great benefits and salary at age 55. We simply cannot afford this.

Also, all federal employee unions need to be disbanded.

There is a huge amount of money which ends up going out to a variety of organizations, including ACORN, churches, public radio and public television. I don't know if all of this is in grants or matching grants, but wherever this money is funneled from, it needs to stop, or be drastically reduced.

If a church or religious organization chooses to help out the victims of an emergency situation, that is all well and good; but the federal government should not reimburse them for doing that. If they want to give and participate in

helping, that is wonderful; but let them do this on their own contributions.

Every public entity which receives money from the government needs to have its books opened and available online for anyone to view. There should be no transfer of money from one public organization to another. I have heard that there are 200–250 different public organizations (and at least one private organization) tied to ACORN and that money travels from one to another (and that they will not open the books for this private organization). Many of these organization shared the same address in New Orleans, even though there were not enough offices to allow 1 office per organization. This makes no sense. If the federal government gives money to this or that alphabet organization, that money needs to be accounted for in an online budget, and *none* of it can be allowed to flow into some other organization—particularly not into a private organization.

Separating Government and Business:

Speaking of organizations, there needs to be a clear wall of separation between all organizations and the government. FNMA and FHLMC are two of the largest businesses in the world; their assets put ENRON to shame. They are, essentially, to blame for the mortgage crisis which has led to our economic recessions. Government policies determined which loans this corporations would buy, and what their qualifications would be. At one time, a person had to have an almost spotless background in order for FNMA or FHLMC to buy their home loan; then, over the past 15 or so years, these entities bought loans from people with horrible credit, little or no income, and without the careful background checks which were once an essential part of the mortgage industry. These original standards need to be restored and these companies need to be privatized and, if possible, split up as well. It was the intermingling of governmental policies and

quasi-governmental agencies which brought us to the place where we are now. That needs to end.

FHA mortgages (those which are backed by the government, and have been historically stable investments) need to be kept at a certain percentage of the market; e.g., no more than 35% of all mortgages. High requirements for borrowers in terms of stability and credit need to be maintained.

The government needs to get out of GM. If it cannot stand on its own, it needs to be parted out.

No more bailouts. Any company too big to fail needs to be carved up into smaller companies which are not too big to fail.

Additional Congressional Spending:

One of the wonderful things which happened this past year, because of President Obama and because of this Congress is, people are beginning to pay attention to the details of Congress and the kind of wheeling and dealing which has become common-place in Washington. This is not a Republican thing or a Democratic thing; this is a government thing, and most people do not like it. If a bill is not good enough to stand on its merits, we do not want to see various congressmen bribed in order to sign on to the bill. Maybe it is the way things have been done in the past; and we can spend all day blaming the other guys for this; but it needs to stop. If no legislation passes for the next 4 years, that is better than legislation which is riddled with bribes, payoffs and earmarks.

Along these same lines: if Alaska wants a bridge or if New York wants to establish some speciality museum, then let them pay for this out of state funds. Federal funds should no longer pay for any of this stuff, apart from keeping up the interstates.

Unfunded federal mandates need to either be funded or rescinded. Let the states decide.

All of the massive bills just passed this year by Congress need to be rescinded, insofar as possible. Unpaid stimulus money should not be paid out to anything; unspent healthcare money should be frozen and used to pay down the debt. All taxes should be rolled back to the amounts which I suggested at the beginning of this article.

Spending on Education:

Washington D.C. ought to set a precedent by letting \$7000 tax dollars follow whatever student to whatever school they want to enroll in. Many private schools can educate a child for that, or very nearly that. A child can take this money and enroll in a public school with a great football program or in a private school with a fantastic arts program. Let parents and children decide where they are going to go. Furthermore, and this is a whole new topic, educational standards need to be lowered, not raised. All children need to be educated, not just those going to college. In most cases, a year of high school practical math and 2 years of English is fine. Give the students a great deal of choice when it comes to their high school curriculum. That is called freedom. This does not mean that there will be no more kids taking Calculus. Kids will continue to take Calculus in high school. What it will insure is, there will no longer need to be a watering down of college prep courses because every child is required to take that course.

In any case, give private schools a lot of latitude in their focus and in their discipline, and let parents and children decide where the child wants to go to school. Public schools where no one goes would obviously need to be shut down or re-opened with a new plan and a new staff. Private schools should be able to set their standards in terms of who they will keep as well. If a school has a zero tolerance policy, then that

is their choice; and students can be removed at their discretion.

All federal funding for school lunches and breakfasts needs to be reduced by 20% every single year.

Transparency:

Legislation protocol: Candidate Obama had some wonderful ideas as to what Congress ought to do. Let me expand on one of them: if a bill spends over \$1 billion, then it must be posted online for at least 2 weeks before any voting takes place. There needs to be a side-by-side English translation of the legalese for this bill explaining where the money is going to and who are the actual or possible recipients (sometime grants are posted and a variety of organizations can apply for these grants). All amendments offered up need to be posted online for 2 weeks with a side-by-side English translation as well before these amendments can be introduced, debated on and voted on. No more of some Senator bringing in a 400 page amendment and adding it to a bill on one day, and then passing the bill the next. It will slow down Congress, obviously. Nothing wrong with that.

Furthermore, I would like to see the name or names of those who have written these bills; and I would like to see the names of those who propose this or that amendment. When there is a \$1 million or higher expenditure in a bill, I want to see some Congressmen's names next to that expenditure.

Healthcare reform:

Most conservatives can tell you what ought to be done: selling policies across state lines is real competition and would reduce prices; tort reform would also reduce prices. Neither approach is found in either the House or Senate healthcare bill (although they spent months talking about *competition*).

It is reasonable that government gets some kind of a price break when a doctor or hospital takes on Medicare and Medicaid patients. However, this price break should be no more than 10% off a physician's normal charges. Underpaying physicians and hospitals means (1) they do not feel guilt about gouging the government; and (2) they have to often charge more for their other customers. Paying doctors more will result in Medicare paying less overall.

I want to add a couple of things: the government needs to overrule the states in one area, and allow high deductible, catastrophic insurance to be available nation-wide, which provides coverage only in a medical catastrophe (e.g., medical treatment which exceeds \$10,000 in a year). With nationwide competition, such insurance would cost somewhere between \$100–\$200/month.

A second thing I would like to see would be clear identification of what each healthcare plan was all about on the first page. Just as movies are rated, insurance companies should have a list of ratings: exclusions, caps, deductibles, etc. should all be clear on the first page of the policy.

Also, Medicare and Medicaid fraud needs to be aggressively pursued by a 3rd party which works on a commission basis. If the *60 Minute* segment on Medicare fraud was somewhat accurate, ferreting it out would not be difficult for professionals to do.

Energy policy:

The biggest problems with solar and wind power are their huge footprints, their inability to create power if the sun is down or the wind is not blowing, and their possible detrimental environmental effects. What we need are more nuclear plants, and what I think is the best approach is the small nuclear plants which are the size of a shed and provide the power for 1000's of houses (several neighborhoods). Given

some of the threats which we face, I think placing neighborhoods on their own electrical grids might be the best way to go. Many neighborhoods receive their water in this way (that is, water is just provided for a single neighborhood from a single source). The miniature nuclear plants can be quickly manufactured and up and running in a very short amount of time.

Judges:

Judge nominees get and up or down vote within 3 months of their being put before Congress.

Foreign Policy:

On the international front, the President ought to attend the next Climate Change conference via tele-conferencing, and thus set a moral precedent.

Those in the armed forces need to be doubled; and we need to establish several bases in Afghanistan and in Iraq (which is on both sides of Iran). This needs to be done quickly and quietly.

The prison at Guantanamo Bay needs to be kept open and those who work there need to be recognized for their hard work. However, the catering to Islam needs to stop.

We also need a coherent, easy-to-understand policy with regards to terrorists and how we will deal with them. In the past, those enemy combatants who were imprisoned, remained behind bars for the entire war and then some of them would be prosecuted. We need to set up a coherent policy, understanding that our war with Islamic fanatics may continue for the next 50–100 years. Eric Holder's foolish policy that we deal with those who attack domestic targets in a civil courtroom needs to be overturned. In any case, there is no reason for an enemy combatant to ever set foot on American soil, even if they somehow strike in the US.

Obviously, I have only begun write; and more ideas will come to me the second I send this out. Republicans need to settle on about 10 simple issues, and at least one of them should be practical but not popular (like taxing *everyone*).

The Burris ACORN Amendment

Senator Rolland Burris (D-IL), President Obama's replacement in the Senate, offered up an amendment to Obama-care which would require an "Office of Minority Health" be established in several different agencies.

On page 241 of this amendment:

In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary . shall award grants, contracts . with public and nonprofit private entities, agencies, as well as Departmental and Cabinet agencies and organizations, and with organizations that are indigenous human resource providers in communities of color. . Such measures shall evaluate community outreach activities, language services, workforce cultural competence, and other areas as determined by the Secretary.

That is ACORN.

For more on this story:

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Obama on Fiscal Responsibility

President Obama on fiscal responsibility: "After years of irresponsibility, we are once again taking responsibility for every dollar we spend the same way families do. It's true that what I've described today will not be enough to get us out of our fiscal mess by itself. We face a deficit that will

take some tough decisions in the next year's budget and in years to come to get under control. But these changes will save the American people billions of dollars. And they'll help to put in place a government that's more efficient and effective, that wastes less money on no-bid contracts, that's cutting bureaucracy and harnessing technology, that's more fiscally responsible and that better serve the American taxpayer."

So, what is this all about? What is this terribly broken thing which President Bush apparently did that President Obama is now fixing?

President Obama has set a goal of saving \$40 billion a year in federal department contracts by 2011. Already, the Obama administration is nearly half-way there.

Now, I am quite happy that our president is looking to save some money anywhere. That is the responsible thing to do. However, this is a mere drop in the federal deficit.

Obama's 2009 federal deficit is \$1.42 trillion, and I think what Obama is doing here is primarily symbolic, playing to the fact that, for most people, they cannot understand large numbers. Whether talking about a million, a billion or a trillion, it is all the same to them.

Let me bring this down to where you live. Let's say that Obama save the full \$40 billion. That is 0.03% of the 2009 deficit. Let's say that, last month, you overspent your budget by \$10,000 (for instance, you had an income of \$5000 but you spend \$15,000). What Obama just did was find out where you could save \$3 (\$2.87 to be more precise). He just figured out how to save you the cost of a cup of Starbucks's coffee.

It's a good start, but let's start thinking big, Barry.

2009: The Year of Living Fecklessly

By Charles Krauthammer

WASHINGTON -- On Tuesday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad did not just reject President Obama's latest feckless floating nuclear deadline. He spat on it, declaring that Iran "will continue resisting" until the U.S. has gotten rid of its 8,000 nuclear warheads.

So ends 2009, the year of "engagement," of the extended hand, of the gratuitous apology -- and of spinning centrifuges, two-stage rockets and a secret enrichment facility that brought Iran materially closer to becoming a nuclear power.

We lost a year. But it was not just any year. It was a year of spectacularly squandered opportunity. In Iran, it was a year of revolution, beginning with a contested election and culminating this week in huge demonstrations mourning the death of the dissident Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri -- and demanding no longer a recount of the stolen election but the overthrow of the clerical dictatorship.

Obama responded by distancing himself from this new birth of freedom. First, scandalous silence. Then, a few grudging words. Then relentless engagement with the murderous regime. With offer after offer, gesture after gesture -- to not Iran, but the "Islamic Republic of Iran," as Obama ever so respectfully called these clerical fascists -- the U.S. conferred legitimacy on a regime desperate to regain it.

Why is this so important? Because revolutions succeed at that singular moment, that imperceptible historical inflection, when the people, and particularly those in power, realize that the regime has lost the mandate of heaven. With this weakening dictatorship desperate for affirmation, why is the U.S. repeatedly offering just such affirmation?

Apart from ostracizing and delegitimizing these gangsters, we should be encouraging and reinforcing the demonstrators. This is no trivial matter. When pursued, beaten, arrested and imprisoned, dissidents can easily succumb to feelings of despair and isolation. Natan Sharansky testifies to the electric effect Ronald Reagan's Evil Empire speech had on lifting spirits in the Gulag. The news was spread cell to cell in code tapped on the walls. They knew they weren't alone, that America was committed to their cause.

Yet so aloof has Obama been that on Hate America Day (Nov. 4, the anniversary of the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran), pro-American counter-demonstrators chanted "Obama, Obama, you are either with us or with them," i.e., their oppressors.

Such cool indifference is more than a betrayal of our values. It's a strategic blunder of the first order.

Forget about human rights. Assume you care only about the nuclear issue. How to defuse it? Negotiations are going nowhere, and whatever U.N. sanctions we might get will be weak, partial, grudging and late. The only real hope is regime change. The revered and widely supported Montazeri had actually issued a fatwa against nuclear weapons.

And even if a successor government were to act otherwise, the nuclear threat would be highly attenuated because it's not the weapon but the regime that creates the danger. (Think India or Britain, for example.) Any proliferation is troubling, but a nonaggressive pro-Western Tehran would completely change the strategic equation and make the threat minimal and manageable.

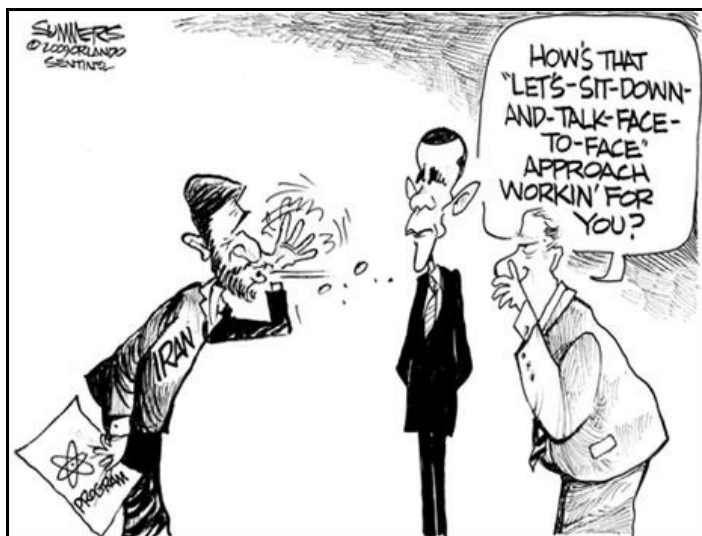
What should we do? Pressure from without -- cutting off gasoline supplies, for example -- to complement and reinforce pressure from within. The pressure should be aimed not at changing the

current regime's nuclear policy -- that will never happen -- but at helping change the regime itself.

Give the kind of covert support to assist dissident communication and circumvent censorship that, for example, we gave Solidarity in Poland during the 1980s. (In those days that meant broadcasting equipment and copying machines.) But of equal importance is robust rhetorical and diplomatic support from the very highest level: full-throated denunciation of the regime's savagery and persecution. In detail -- highlighting cases, the way Western leaders adopted the causes of Sharansky and Andrei Sakharov during the rise of the dissident movement that helped bring down the Soviet empire.

Will this revolution succeed? The odds are long but the reward immense. Its ripple effects would extend from Afghanistan to Iraq (in both conflicts, Iran actively supports insurgents who have long been killing Americans and their allies) to Lebanon and Gaza where Iran's proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas, are arming for war.

One way or the other, Iran will dominate 2010. Either there will be an Israeli attack or Iran will arrive at -- or cross -- the nuclear threshold. Unless revolution intervenes. Which is why to fail to do everything in our power to support this popular revolt is unforgivable.



Beltway Christmas: Cash for Corruptocrats

by Michelle Malkin

Creators Syndicate - The Democrats are right. Sleazy bribes and pork payoffs didn't start with their government health care takeover bill. They've been doling out taxpayer-funded goodies for votes all year. Harry Reid's latest Cash for Cloture deals are the culmination of Washington's 2009 shopping spree at our expense.

Go back to January and February. The multitrillion-dollar stimulus bill was the mother of all legislative Christmas trees. The ruling party used the economic downturn to redistribute wealth from struggling Americans to favored congressional districts, phantom districts and special interests from golf-cart makers to fly-by-night beauty salons.



According to a new study by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Democratic districts have raked in nearly twice as much porkulus money as GOP districts - without regard to the actual economic suffering and job loss in those districts. In fact, the researchers found that far

more stimulus money went to higher-income areas than to lower-income areas.

That includes Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's backyard - where a \$54 million no-bid contract was awarded to a firm with little experience to relocate a luxury Bay Area wine train due to flood concerns.

And it includes Barack Obama's home state of Illinois, which reaped the single biggest earmark in the porkulus bill - \$1 billion for the dubious FutureGen near-zero emissions "clean coal" plant earmark championed by disgraced Democrat and former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin.

And it includes Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's backyard - where he secured billions in high-speed rail stimulus earmarks from which he plans to fund a pie-in-the-sky public transportation line from Los Angeles to Las Vegas.

When taxpayers objected to business as usual masquerading as economic recovery, New York Democratic Sen. Charles Schumer sneered: "You lost." He jibed on the Senate floor while wagging a grabby finger, "And let me say this to all of the chattering class that so much focuses on those little, tiny, yes, porky amendments: The American people really don't care." The "American people" Schumer was referring to, of course, were the privileged minority of stimulus beneficiaries - not the rest of us "chattering" dissenters stuck with the bill for those billions in "little, tiny, yes, porky amendments."

No legislation has been immune to congressional shakedown. After the Congressional Black Caucus balked loudly enough, Democratic Rep. Barney Frank - chairman of the House Financial Services Committee - larded up the majority's Wall Street regulatory "reform" bill with \$4 billion in payoffs to minority special interests - including former failed Air America radio partner Inner City Broadcasting Corp.

The cash-strapped firm is run by Percy Sutton, a New York City crony of Charlie Rangel's and Al Sharpton's. The money will come out of the ever-morphing TARP bank bailout fund - which went from a toxic assets purchase plan to a capital injection plan, back to a toxic assets purchase plan, then to a life insurance company bailout and on to an auto-supplier bailout.

Leading the charge for the Cash for Cronies of Color drive: California Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters, who had already extracted \$12 million in TARP funds for OneUnited, a minority-owned bank that is one of her key campaign donors and a company in which both Waters and her husband own massive amounts of stock.



Which brings us to Demcare, the latest wealth redistribution scheme disguised as health care reform. In addition to the infamous \$300 million "Louisiana Purchase" for Democratic Sen. Mary Landrieu and the (at least) \$45 million "Cornhusker Kickback" for sellout Democratic Sen. Ben Nelson of Nebraska, Harry Reid threw around other, less-publicized gobs of cash for cloture votes to cut off debate and ram the bill through. He tossed in a Hospital Helper of \$100

million to Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., whose re-election bid is in hot water.

There are bennies for insurance companies and hospitals in Michigan, and "frontier freebies" for hospitals in Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming. There's a New England's Special Syrup for Vermont and Massachusetts - who will get similar (though less generous) special treatment by the feds to that of Nebraska in covering Medicaid expansion costs. Combined with Nebraska's tab, the exclusive clique's payoffs will cost taxpayers at least \$1.2 billion over 10 years.

There's also an ACORN/community organizer-friendly provision for minority health bureaucracies that was sought by Sen. Roland Burris, D-Ill., according to John McCormack of the Weekly Standard.



And there's a \$10 billion socialized medicine sop to Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders for "community health clinics" serving in essence as universal health care satellite offices. "We are talking about a revolution," Sanders enthused during the Senate's sneaky Sunday session.

No, revolution will come when taxpayers have a chance to kick these reverse Santa Clauses posing as saviors out of office. It can't happen a minute too soon.

Michelle Malkin is the author of "Culture of Corruption: Obama and his Team of Tax Cheats, Crooks & Cronies" (Regnery 2009). Her e-mail address is malkinblog@gmail.com.

David Gregory Grills Axelrod

MR. DAVID GREGORY: This Sunday: The Democrats now appear to have the votes to pass sweeping healthcare reform in the Senate, and the president stands at the brink of a major legislative victory.

(Videotape)

PRES. BARACK OBAMA: It now appears that the American people will have the vote they deserve.

(End videotape)

MR. GREGORY: But the White House failed to win any Republican support for the measure.

(Videotape)

SEN. MITCH McCONNELL (R-KY): This bill is a legislative train wreck of historic proportions.

(End videotape)

MR. GREGORY: Before the final vote, the debate over whether this is real reform, pitting Democrats against Democrats.

(Videotape)

DR. HOWARD DEAN (D-VT): For me, I'd kill the bill all entirely.

(End videotape)

(Videotape)

MR. ROBERT GIBBS: I don't think any rational person would say killing a bill makes a whole lot of sense at this point.

(End videotape)

MR. GREGORY: What's next? And what is the political impact of this legislation in 2010 and beyond? Joining us, the president's senior adviser, David Axelrod; and then the man who helped ignite a debate over health care within his party, former DNC chairman and 2004 Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean. Our roundtable weighs in as well on the politics of health care and the huge political challenges facing this White House in the new year as it tackles high unemployment and a sour mood in the country. With us: MSNBC's Joe Scarborough, the Daily Kos' Markos Moulitsas, former RNC chair Ed Gillespie and PBS' Tavis Smiley.

But first, the great blizzard of December of 2009 blanketed the East Coast. It dumped nearly 22 inches of snow on the nation's capital. It served as a backdrop for a flurry of activity in the halls of Congress this weekend, as Senate Democrats reached a compromise agreement to move healthcare reform one step closer.

Joining me live this morning, the president's senior adviser, who traded loafers for snowshoes this morning, David Axelrod.

MR. DAVID AXELROD: We call this a dusting in Chicago, David, I just want you to know.

MR. GREGORY: Yeah, I know, I know. Well, I'm from L.A. and this is a big deal. Thank you very much for being here.

MR. AXELROD: Uh-huh.

MR. GREGORY: You appear to have this compromise now in the Senate, 60 votes now that Ben Nelson is onboard. Is this mission accomplished, or does this represent a selling-out of key principles that the president fought for initially on health care?



MR. AXELROD: Oh, no, I think this, this adheres to the key principles that the president set. It's going to bring more security to people who, who have insurance today in relation to their insurance companies, it'll reduce their costs over time as well. It's going to help people who don't have insurance, including small businesses who can't afford it or people who don't get it through their employer, get it at a cost they can afford. It's going to extend the life of Medicare and give seniors some, some more support in terms of prescription drugs and better care. And in the

long run, it's going to reduce our deficits, the CBO said yesterday, by \$132 billion in the first 10 years, over a trillion in the second, and, and, and stop the inexorable rise of healthcare costs that threatens to crush our budget...

MR. GREGORY: Right.

MR. AXELROD: ...family budgets, business budgets.

MR. GREGORY: Well, we'll--I want to break some of these down. But do you describe it as mission accomplished?

MR. AXELROD: No. I, I think it is a--it's a landmark step, it's a, it's a great step. I agree with much of what Paul Krugman wrote in The New York Times last Friday, he's been a strong advocate for healthcare reform, and he said this is a great foundation for the future. It is light years ahead of where we were. Look, David, if you're a person with a pre-existing condition today, you're excluded from getting insurance by most insurance companies. I went through that with--my child has a chronic illness, could not get her on insurance. A huge--this was when I was a young reporter and couldn't afford the out-of-pocket expenses. Millions of people are going through this in this country, and there are myriad other examples of, of people who will benefit from these changes.

MR. GREGORY: Let me back up, talk about just some procedure. Is this a done deal? Will this pass the Congress?

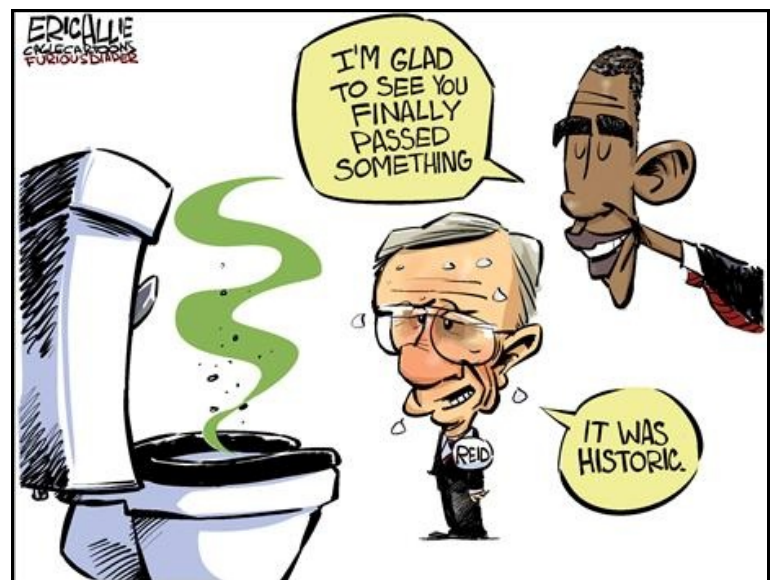
MR. AXELROD: I think it will pass the Congress. I mean, obviously, it is a big step along the way. We've got additional steps to take. The House has a bill, the Senate has a bill, they'll have...

MR. GREGORY: And there are some key differences, including the House has a public option to create more competition, the Senate bill does not.

MR. AXELROD: No. But the Senate, the Senate bill has some very tough restrictions in terms of how insurance companies can spend the money that they collect from premiums, it has a great accountability for insurance companies, it creates competition between private insurers and gives people options and choice, and that's what we were after.

MR. GREGORY: But how hard will it be to reconcile the two?

MR. AXELROD: Well, I think we're going to get it done. I think people understand that this is a historic crossroads, David. Seven presidents have tried to pass comprehensive health insurance reform, seven presidents have failed. We've been talking about it for 100 years. We're on the doorstep of getting it done, and it'll be a great victory for the American people.



MR. GREGORY: Some people have raised the question about whether the Senate rules ought to be changed. In order to avoid a filibuster you needed the 60 votes, and you were able to get there with Senator Nelson. But a lot of people, including Planned Parenthood, condemning the abortion agreement where it would place greater restrictions on getting abortions in the states in

these exchanges that had to be struck to get Senator Nelson onboard. He also got extra money for Medicaid. Do you think it ought to be changed in the Senate so it doesn't rely, all of this healthcare reform, on one senator?

MR. AXELROD: Let me say first on the, on the issue of abortion, there have been concerns expressed both from the pro-choice groups and some anti-choice groups, pro-life groups on this. But the fact is it really doesn't change the status quo, and that's what we were after. The president said this should not be the vehicle through which the abortion debate and changes in the abortion law should come. In terms of the Senate...



MR. GREGORY: Yeah.

MR. AXELROD: ...look, I'm not--these are time-honored rules. I'm not going to--I mean, obviously it makes it more difficult, they were structured that way. What we should be able to do, though, is move forward in, in, in good faith, and what we've seen is the rules being used time and time and time again to delay votes, to try and scuttle the legislation by--through parliamentary maneuvers, because there's a majority of senators who support health insurance reform.

We ought to have an up or down vote, and that's what all of this has been about.

MR. GREGORY: Are you going to get this by the end of the year?

MR. AXELROD: Well, I think that the--I'm, I'm confident that the Senate's going to vote on this before they go home.

MR. GREGORY: Before Christmas. But then a final bill, a reconciled bill, do you think you get it by the end of this year?

MR. AXELROD: Oh, no. I mean, I think that we're going to have some work to do when we come back. But obviously, this is a major step forward.

MR. GREGORY: Let me talk about where the public is on this. This was our poll this week, Wall Street Journal/NBC News. Good idea, bad idea, the president's healthcare plan? Forty-seven percent say it's a bad idea, 44 percent say they thought it'd be better to keep the current system. Is the public really for this?

MR. AXELROD: I think that there's a big anomaly in the polls that's worth discussing. When you ask people "do you support the bill that's working through Congress, the president's bill" and so on, they give you that result. When you describe what's in the bill, when you describe the fact that there are all kinds of protections for patients and consumers within the system, a, a, a, a patient's bill of rights on steroids, as--we've had that debate for years, are we going to protect patients? When you'd say--when you explain that small businesses are going to get tax credits and assistance so they can offer health insurance, and that individuals who don't get it through work are going to be able to get health insurance at a price they can afford, when you talk about the fact that it reduces deficits, extends the life of Medicare; when you talk about all of those things, people are very strongly supportive. But that's not the picture they've gotten through this

kind of narrow debate we've seen on television in Congress.

MR. GREGORY: The fact that you have no Republican votes is striking here for healthcare reform. If you go back to Social Security or the Medicare vote in the '60s, significant Republican support. Is this a failure of leadership, that the president can't get one Republican to support this?

MR. AXELROD: Well, obviously we live in different times. I wish we had the kind of spirit of, of cooperation that you saw in, in past generations. We live in a, a, a different time. As you know, at the beginning of this debate one of the Senate Republicans said, "If we can just defeat this bill, we can inflict a great political loss on the president and that will help us as a party." We shouldn't be thinking in those terms. We should be thinking about the people who can't get insurance today. We should be thinking about the people who get thrown off of insurance because they become seriously ill or go bankrupt because of a serious illness.

MR. GREGORY: But how do you describe...

MR. AXELROD: They will be helped by this legislation. And that's what we should be doing, Republicans and Democrats.

MR. GREGORY: But talk about Republicans. How do you describe, how do you describe and assess the Republican minority in Washington today?

MR. AXELROD: Oh, in what, in what regard? I mean, I think what's clear...

MR. GREGORY: You--do you...

MR. AXELROD: ...is that they, they have adopted a strategy of opposition, and they have not offered alternative--significant alternative ideas, other than to go back to what we've done before. Look, historically these health reforms have been

beaten by the special interests, the insurance industry.

MR. GREGORY: Right.

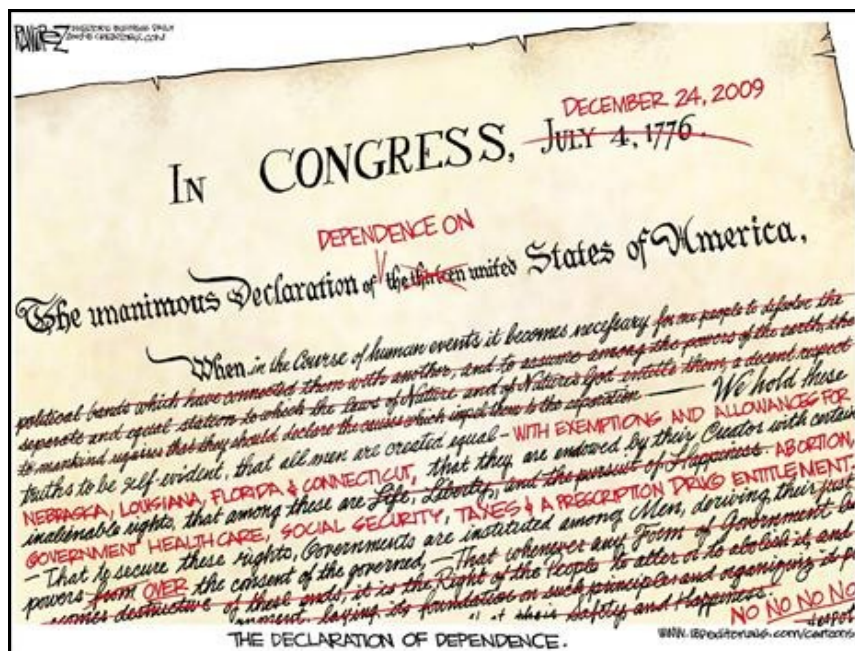
MR. AXELROD: They are trying to defeat it now. The Republican Party historically has stood with the insurance industry in trying to beat back reform. And they're playing that traditional role, and that's a shame.

MR. GREGORY: You've got it not just from the right, but you've also got criticism from the left. There was something of a, of a revolt in the Democratic Party over health care this week, led by former DNC Chairman Howard Dean, who we'll be speaking to on the program in just a couple of minutes. And essentially, he said, "This is not reform. And if I were a senator, I would vote against it." How do you react to that?

MR. AXELROD: Well, first of all, let me say I respect Howard Dean. I think he's someone who cares passionately about this issue. He's a medical doctor. He--but what--but he just wasn't familiar with some of the aspects of this legislation. He said, for example, that insurance companies could skim off unlimited amounts of money for bonuses and CEO pay and administrative costs. This strictly limits what they can do, and consumers will get rebates if they exceed those limits. And those limits are high and they're reasonable. He said that people would be forced to buy insurance at a price they can afford. There's a hardship exemption in this legislation, no one would have to pay more than 8 percent, be forced to buy a policy for more than 8 percent of their income, and they get all kinds of assistance in terms of tax credits to do so. So I just think when you look at the bill in its totality, it, it doesn't square up with his critique.

MR. GREGORY: But, but look--here--but here's the issues. Look--what liberals say is look at what you gave up along the way: Medicare expansion, a public option. And then go back and look at the

president's performance when it came to getting this compromise vs. how he campaigned for health care as a candidate. And I've got a few of the bullet points of campaign promises made: that it--there would be universal coverage when it came to getting health care. He opposed an individual mandate, which, of course, is part of this bill. And he indicated this would be paid for by rolling back Bush tax cuts, tax cuts. There's not universal coverage here. The individual mandate is in there and, in fact, there are a slew of taxes that are part of this legislation, including on the Cadillac plans that a lot of union members hold. So can't you understand that the left in this country says, "Hey, this is not how you campaigned"?



MR. AXELROD: No, David. I--what--here's what I see. What I see is a bill that will afford 30, 31 million people who don't have insurance today a chance to get it. It will help small businesses who can't give their employees a chance to get it. It will help people who have insurance so that they have the power in their relationship with their insurance companies. It will reduce--the president talked about reducing this inexorable rise in premiums and in the cost to our budgets. It will do that. It will improve care. I think this is major reform, it's the reform he spoke about. Obviously...

MR. GREGORY: But this is a compromise.

MR. AXELROD: ...in any legislation...

MR. GREGORY: It is not the major reform he talked about.

MR. AXELROD: There is no...

MR. GREGORY: It is different.

MR. AXELROD: ...major piece of legislation that's ever been passed in this country, David, that

doesn't include compromise. That's the legislative process. But the question is, in the main, does it achieve what we wanted to achieve? This is--it's not perfect. It--and over time it may be improved, as all legislation is.

MR. GREGORY: Do you think it should be improved?

MR. AXELROD: I, I--well, look, the president had a--the president supported a, a public option. But there are other ways to get competition and choice. You know, we'll see what happens over time.

MR. GREGORY: He supported a public option. He did not fight for it till the end of the day.

MR. AXELROD: Well, look, he made the case again and again for it. But understand, he--this is a small part of a large healthcare reform. The public option was within this health insurance exchange for the 30 million who can't get health care.

MR. GREGORY: Right.

MR. AXELROD: The estimates of the CBO that--is that, you know, about five million people would have availed themselves of it in a country of 300 million.

MR. GREGORY: But here's, here's New York...

MR. AXELROD: Let's not overemphasize it.

MR. GREGORY: Yeah.

MR. AXELROD: It is important, it's valuable, but so are the reforms that are in there now. There's going to be competition and choice for everyone who doesn't have insurance today. They're going to get it at a price they can afford. And, and we won't have this horrible situation where if you move job--if you change jobs or lose your job, that you find yourself suddenly vulnerable to catastrophe.

MR. GREGORY: I want to press you on one other point that needs to be challenged, it seems to me. The president said this week that this legislation will bend the cost curve. Now, I take that to mean you bend the cost curve, that healthcare costs begin to come down. In fact, in this legislation--and not just those familiar with it, but other experts I've talked to say it's not the case, it will not actually bring costs down. In fact, over a 10-year period, costs will go up. They may be contained, but they are going to go up. Healthcare costs do go up. There are only pilot programs in this legislation, only pilot programs that actually bend the cost curve. This is not reform when it comes to bringing down overall healthcare costs.

MR. AXELROD: Well, I'd say a few things about that. Every--all of the healthcare economists look at the, look at this bill and say it contains many or most or all of the, the sort of major devices that have been talked about for lowering care. The bill--the amendment that was added yesterday will quickly expand these pilot projects as they work nationally. And, you know, you can look at

what the CBO has said: it's going to reduce deficits by 132 billion in the first year, by a trillion in the next year, and it's going to slow the advance of health costs and it's going to save thousands of dollars in premiums for the average family over the next decade.

MR. GREGORY: Right. But that's slightly different than saying that healthcare costs are actually going to start coming down.

MR. AXELROD: David, we're going to insure...

MR. GREGORY: And that was the priority initially the president talked about.

MR. AXELROD: David--no, the president said we have to slow the growth of, of these premiums, which have doubled in the last 10 years and will double again in the next 10 years or more if we don't act.

MR. GREGORY: Let me ask you, finally, about the political impact of all of this. This is the president's approval rating as it stands now, according to our poll: he's below 50 percent in approval at 47 percent. Among independents, look at this, his approval rating is at 40 percent, down from 58 percent back in March. Peter Hart, the Democratic pollster, indicates that for Democrats, the red flags are flying at full mast. At what political cost to the Democratic Party in 2010 and 2012 have you achieved this victory?

MR. AXELROD: Well, first of all, I don't ascribe poll numbers to, to this particular, to this particular issue. I think that we're governing, remember, in an economically difficult time. We came to office in the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression, and so of course I could've told you a year ago that our numbers were not going to be, were not going to be as strong a year later. But here's the thing, David. If we--I guarantee you, the one thing the president's not doing is spreading the NBC or any other poll in front of him and pondering the

political ramifications. What he's looking at are the, the millions and millions of people who have pre-existing conditions who can't get health care; the millions of people who--working people who can't get health coverage because they can't afford it. He's looking at the implications for our long-term budget if we don't act. He's looking at Medicare and its survivability. We'll add 10 years to Medicare through this health reform. Those are the numbers he's looking at. If the president--the president's belief is if he does his job and moves this country forward, the rest'll take care of itself. I don't think anybody wants a president who's governing according to the NBC/Wall Street Journal poll or any other.

MR. GREGORY: He spent a lot of political capital on this fight. Will it cost Democrats House seats or Senate seats in 2010?

MR. AXELROD: I think a year from now, when this bill passes and this wave of insurance reforms are implemented that give people more power in their relationship with their insurance companies so they don't--they're not the victims of arbitrary decisions; when, when seniors realize that their prescription drug costs are less because we've begun to fill in that doughnut hole; when small businesses begin to get those tax credits to help them get health care, they're going to say, "You know what? This was a pretty good deal for us."

MR. GREGORY: Are they--are the Democrats going to lose seats in the House or the Senate because of this legislation?

MR. AXELROD: I think we're going to have a good result next, next November. I'm not going to predict where we are. Again, we're governing through difficult times. I think we're going to be in a better place. And what I suggest is that you guys wait until next October to talk about polls, when they're actually germane to an election, because that's a, that's an eternity away.

MR. GREGORY: All right, David Axelrod, thank you very much.

MR. AXELROD: Good to be with you.

MR. GREGORY: Continued good luck with your hard work.

MR. AXELROD: Thank you.

Krauthammer: Morality of the Left on the Senate Healthcare Bill

BAIER: Charles, there are a lot of states who are on the list of goodies who are in financial trouble that perhaps those state officials will say this is going to be painful.

KRAUTHAMMER: That's what is so ironic about this. Remember the whole impetus of the bill was the moral imperative of insuring the uninsured, an act of compassion.

What Harry Reid is saying after he gets this monstrosity through the Senate is that if your senator was uncorrupt in achieving it, they are going to suffer and they were naive, probably acting like rookies.

I find it interesting how Lieberman was excoriated and Nelson was celebrated by the left, especially, and Democrats. Look, if you want to hold out on a matter of principle or policy, as Lieberman did on the matter of the public option, and saying it would be unaffordable, well, and you get it by holding up the process, that's called a deal. And that is a concession over a policy issue that applies to everybody in the country.

But what Nelson got this unbelievable deal in which all the other states get three years of the federal government assuming the cost of extra Medicaid enrollees, but after that, all the other states have to chip in except Nebraska. It is the Nebraska exception.

Now, that is simple corruption, and yet what he does is countenanced as OK. In fact, Reid hails it as real good legislating, and what Lieberman did is excoriated as a betrayal. It shows you how the values of all this, which started out as a high-minded crusade on behalf of the unfortunately has been twisted in a fairly radical way.



Change Nobody Believes In

A bill so reckless that it has to be rammed through on a partisan vote on Christmas eve from the WSJ

And tidings of comfort and joy from Harry Reid too. The Senate Majority Leader has decided that the last few days before Christmas are the opportune moment for a narrow majority of Democrats to stuff ObamaCare through the Senate to meet an arbitrary White House deadline. Barring some extraordinary reversal, it now seems as if they have the 60 votes they need to jump off this cliff, with one-seventh of the economy in tow.

Mr. Obama promised a new era of transparent good government, yet on Saturday morning Mr. Reid threw out the 2,100-page bill that the world's greatest deliberative body spent just 17

days debating and replaced it with a new "manager's amendment" that was stapled together in covert partisan negotiations. Democrats are barely even bothering to pretend to care what's in it, not that any Senator had the chance to digest it in the 38 hours before the first cloture vote at 1 a.m. this morning. After procedural motions that allow for no amendments, the final vote could come at 9 p.m. on December 24.

Even in World War I there was a Christmas truce.

The rushed, secretive way that a bill this destructive and unpopular is being forced on the country shows that "reform" has devolved into the raw exercise of political power for the single purpose of permanently expanding the American entitlement state. An increasing roll of leaders in health care and business are looking on aghast at a bill that is so large and convoluted that no one can truly understand it, as Finance Chairman Max Baucus admitted on the floor last week. The only goal is to ram it into law while the political window is still open, and clean up the mess later.

- Health costs. From the outset, the White House's core claim was that reform would reduce health costs for individuals and businesses, and they're sticking to that story. "Anyone who says otherwise simply hasn't read the bills," Mr. Obama said over the weekend. This is so utterly disingenuous that we doubt the President really believes it.

The best and most rigorous cost analysis was recently released by the insurer WellPoint, which mined its actuarial data in various regional markets to model the Senate bill. WellPoint found that a healthy 25-year-old in Milwaukee buying coverage on the individual market will see his costs rise by 178%. A small business based in Richmond with eight employees in average health will see a 23% increase. Insurance costs for a

40-year-old family with two kids living in Indianapolis will pay 106% more. And on and on.

These increases are solely the result of ObamaCare-above and far beyond the status quo-because its strict restrictions on underwriting and risk-pooling would distort insurance markets. All but a handful of states have rejected regulations like "community rating" because they encourage younger and healthier buyers to wait until they need expensive care, increasing costs for everyone. Benefits and pricing will now be determined by politics.

As for the White House's line about cutting costs by eliminating supposed "waste," even Victor Fuchs, an eminent economist generally supportive of ObamaCare, warned last week that these political theories are overly simplistic. "The oft-heard promise 'we will find out what works and what does not' scarcely does justice to the complexity of medical practice," the Stanford professor wrote.

- Steep declines in choice and quality. This is all of a piece with the hubris of an Administration that thinks it can substitute government planning for market forces in determining where the \$33 trillion the U.S. will spend on medicine over the next decade should go.

OpinionJournal Related Stories:

John Fund: Rahm's Fuzzy Math

This centralized system means above all fewer choices; what works for the political class must work for everyone. With formerly private insurers converted into public utilities, for instance, they'll inevitably be banned from selling products like health savings accounts that encourage more cost-conscious decisions.

Unnoticed by the press corps, the Congressional Budget Office argued recently that the Senate bill would so "substantially reduce flexibility in terms of the types, prices, and number of private sellers

of health insurance" that companies like WellPoint might need to "be considered part of the federal budget."

With so large a chunk of the economy and medical practice itself in Washington's hands, quality will decline. Ultimately, "our capacity to innovate and develop new therapies would suffer most of all," as Harvard Medical School Dean Jeffrey Flier recently wrote in our pages. Take the \$2 billion annual tax-rising to \$3 billion in 2018-that will be leveled against medical device makers, among the most innovative U.S. industries. Democrats believe that more advanced health technologies like MRI machines and drug-coated stents are driving costs too high, though patients and their physicians might disagree.

"The Senate isn't hearing those of us who are closest to the patient and work in the system every day," Brent Eastman, the chairman of the American College of Surgeons, said in a statement for his organization and 18 other speciality societies opposing ObamaCare. For no other reason than ideological animus, doctor-owned hospitals will face harsh new limits on their growth and who they're allowed to treat. Physician Hospitals of America says that ObamaCare will "destroy over 200 of America's best and safest hospitals."

- Blowing up the federal fisc. Even though Medicare's unfunded liabilities are already about 2.6 times larger than the entire U.S. economy in 2008, Democrats are crowing that ObamaCare will cost "only" \$871 billion over the next decade while fantastically reducing the deficit by \$132 billion, according to CBO.

Yet some 98% of the total cost comes after 2014-remind us why there must absolutely be a vote this week-and most of the taxes start in 2010. That includes the payroll tax increase for individuals earning more than \$200,000 that rose

to 0.9 from 0.5 percentage points in Mr. Reid's final machinations. Job creation, here we come.

Other deceptions include a new entitlement for long-term care that starts collecting premiums tomorrow but doesn't start paying benefits until late in the decade. But the worst is not accounting for a formula that automatically slashes Medicare payments to doctors by 21.5% next year and deeper after that. Everyone knows the payment cuts won't happen but they remain in the bill to make the cost look lower. The American Medical Association's priority was eliminating this "sustainable growth rate" but all they got in return for their year of ObamaCare cheerleading was a two-month patch snuck into the defense bill that passed over the weekend.

The truth is that no one really knows how much ObamaCare will cost because its assumptions on paper are so unrealistic. To hide the cost increases created by other parts of the bill and transfer them onto the federal balance sheet, the Senate sets up government-run "exchanges" that will subsidize insurance for those earning up to 400% of the poverty level, or \$96,000 for a family of four in 2016. Supposedly they would only be offered to those whose employers don't provide insurance or work for small businesses.

As Eugene Steuerle of the left-leaning Urban Institute points out, this system would treat two workers with the same total compensation-whatever the mix of cash wages and benefits-very differently. Under the Senate bill, someone who earned \$42,000 would get \$5,749 from the current tax exclusion for employer-sponsored coverage but \$12,750 in the exchange. A worker making \$60,000 would get \$8,310 in the exchanges but only \$3,758 in the current system.

For this reason Mr. Steuerle concludes that the Senate bill is not just a new health system but also "a new welfare and tax system" that will

warp the labor market. Given the incentives of these two-tier subsidies, employers with large numbers of lower-wage workers like Wal-Mart may well convert them into "contractors" or do more outsourcing. As more and more people flood into "free" health care, taxpayer costs will explode.

- Political intimidation. The experts who have pointed out such complications have been ignored or dismissed as "ideologues" by the White House. Those parts of the health-care industry that couldn't be bribed outright, like Big Pharma, were coerced into acceding to this agenda. The White House was able to, er, persuade the likes of the AMA and the hospital lobbies because the federal government will control 55% of total U.S. health spending under ObamaCare, according to the Administration's own Medicare actuaries.



Others got hush money, namely Nebraska's Ben Nelson. Even liberal Governors have been howling for months about ObamaCare's unfunded spending mandates: Other budget priorities like education will be crowded out when about 21% of the U.S. population is on

Medicaid, the joint state-federal program intended for the poor. Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman calculates that ObamaCare will result in \$2.5 billion in new costs for his state that "will be passed on to citizens through direct or indirect taxes and fees," as he put it in a letter to his state's junior Senator.

So in addition to abortion restrictions, Mr. Nelson won the concession that Congress will pay for 100% of Nebraska Medicaid expansions into perpetuity. His capitulation ought to cost him his political career, but more to the point, what about the other states that don't have a Senator who's the 60th vote for ObamaCare?

"After a nearly century-long struggle we are on the cusp of making health-care reform a reality in the United States of America," Mr. Obama said on Saturday. He's forced to claim the mandate of "history" because he can't claim the mandate of voters. Some 51% of the public is now opposed, according to National Journal's composite of all health polling. The more people know about ObamaCare, the more unpopular it becomes.

The tragedy is that Mr. Obama inherited a consensus that the health-care status quo needs serious reform, and a popular President might have crafted a durable compromise that blended the best ideas from both parties. A more honest and more thoughtful approach might have even done some good. But as Mr. Obama suggested, the Democratic old guard sees this plan as the culmination of 20th-century liberalism.

So instead we have this vast expansion of federal control. Never in our memory has so unpopular a bill been on the verge of passing Congress, never has social and economic legislation of this magnitude been forced through on a purely partisan vote, and never has a party exhibited more sheer political willfulness that is reckless even for Washington or had more warning about the consequences of its actions.

These 60 Democrats are creating a future of epic increases in spending, taxes and command-and-control regulation, in which bureaucracy trumps innovation and transfer payments are more important than private investment and individual decisions. In short, the Obama Democrats have chosen change nobody believes in-outside of themselves-and when it passes America will be paying for it for decades to come.

From:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704398304574598130440164954.html>

The WellPoint Revelation

Private insurance premiums could triple under ObamaCare from the WSJ

Washington is captivated by the Senate melodrama over the so-called public option, salivating at the ring of Harry Reid's political bell (see below). But the most important health-care questions continue to be about the policy substance-particularly those that Democrats don't want asked.

Foremost among them is: How will ObamaCare affect insurance premiums in the private health-care markets? Despite indignant Democratic denials, the near-certainty is that their plan will cause costs to rise across the board. The latest data on this score come from a series of state-level studies from the insurance company WellPoint Inc.

At the request of Congressional delegations worried about their constituents-call it a public service-WellPoint mined its own actuarial data to model ObamaCare in the 14 states where it runs Blue Cross plans. The study therefore takes into account market and demographic differences that other industry studies have not, such as the one from the trade group America's Health

Insurance Plans, which looked at aggregate national trends.

In all of the 14 states WellPoint scrutinized, ObamaCare would drive up premiums for the small businesses and individuals who are most of WellPoint's customers. (Other big insurers, like Aetna, focus on the market among large businesses.) Young and healthy consumers will see the largest increases-their premiums would more than triple in some states-though average middle-class buyers will pay more too.

Not even two hours after Wellpoint had presented its materials on the Hill, Democrats were already trashing it-which, considering that it runs to some 238 pages and took weeks to prepare, must have required remarkable powers of digestion and analysis.

"This is yet another insurance-industry report that twists the facts to produce a skewed result," averred Linda Douglass, the White House communications director on health care. Said a spokesman for the Senate Finance Committee, "This is akin to the tobacco companies commissioning another study claiming nicotine isn't addictive and cigarettes don't cause cancer." So in its Saul Alinsky fashion, the White House again attacks the messenger so it can avoid rebutting the message.

In fact, what distinguishes the Wellpoint study is its detailed rigor. Take Ohio, where a young, healthy 25-year-old living in Columbus can purchase insurance from WellPoint today for about \$52 per month in the individual market. WellPoint's actuaries calculate the bill will rise to \$79 because Democrats are going to require it to issue policies to anyone who applies, even if they've waited until they're sick to buy insurance. Then they'll also require the company to charge everyone nearly the same rate, bringing the premium to \$134. Add in an extra \$17, since Democrats will require higher benefit levels, and a share of the new health industry taxes (\$6), and

monthly premiums have risen to \$157, a 199% boost.

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old husband and wife with two kids would see their premiums jump by 122%-to \$737 from \$332-while a small business with eight employees in Franklin County would see premiums climb by 86%. It's true that the family or the individual might qualify for subsidies if their incomes are low enough, but the business wouldn't qualify under the Senate Finance bill WellPoint examined. And even if there are subsidies, the new costs the bill creates don't vaporize. They're merely transferred to taxpayers nationwide-or financed with deficits, which will be financed eventually with higher taxes.

The story is largely the same from state to state, though the increases are smaller in the few states that have already adopted the same mandates and regulations that Democrats want to impose on all states. For the average small employer in high-cost New York, for instance, premiums would only rise by 6%. But they'd shoot up by 94% for the same employer in Indianapolis, 91% in St. Louis and 53% in Milwaukee.

A family of four with average health in those same cities would all face cost increases of 122% buying insurance on the individual market. And it's important to understand that these are merely the new costs created by ObamaCare-not including the natural increases in medical costs over time from new therapies and the like.

Democrats have been selling health care as one huge free lunch in which everyone gets better insurance while paying less. But the policy facts simply don't add up, and Democrats are attacking WellPoint because they don't want anyone to understand what their health-care schemes will mean in practice. Democrats know that if the public is given the facts and the time to consider them, Americans might demand that Democrats stop pushing the country off this cliff and start all over.

From:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703567204574499034177212064.html>

Passing health reform could be a nightmare for Obama

By Robert Samuelson

Barack Obama's quest for historic health-care legislation has turned into a parody of leadership. We usually associate presidential leadership with the pursuit of goals that, though initially unpopular, serve America's long-term interests. Obama has reversed this. He's championing increasingly unpopular legislation that threatens the country's long-term interests. "This isn't about me," he likes to say, "I have great health insurance." But of course, it is about him: about the legacy he covets as the president who achieved "universal" health insurance. He'll be disappointed.

Even if Congress passes legislation -- a good bet -- the finished product will fall far short of Obama's extravagant promises. It will not cover everyone. It will not control costs. It will worsen the budget outlook. It will lead to higher taxes. It will disrupt how, or whether, companies provide insurance for their workers. As the real-life (as opposed to rhetorical) consequences unfold, they will rebut Obama's claim that he has "solved" the health-care problem. His reputation will suffer.

It already has. Despite Obama's eloquence and command of the airwaves, public suspicions are rising. In April, 57 percent of Americans approved of his "handling of health care" and 29 percent disapproved, reports the Post-ABC News poll; in the latest survey, 44 percent approved and 53 percent disapproved. About half worried that their care would deteriorate and that health costs would rise.

These fears are well-grounded. The various health-care proposals represent atrocious

legislation. To be sure, they would provide insurance to 30 million or more Americans by 2019. People would enjoy more security. But even these gains must be qualified. Some of the newly insured will get healthier, but how many and by how much is unclear. The uninsured now receive 50 to 70 percent as much care as the insured. The administration argues that today's system has massive waste. If so, greater participation in the waste by the newly insured may not make them much better off.

The remaining uninsured may also exceed estimates. Under the Senate bill, they would total 24 million in 2019, reckons Richard Foster, chief actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. But a wild card is immigration. From 1999 to 2008, about 60 percent of the increase in the uninsured occurred among Hispanics. That was related to immigrants and their children (many American-born). Most illegal immigrants aren't covered by Obama's proposal. If we don't curb immigration of the poor and unskilled -- people who can't afford insurance -- Obama's program will be less effective and more expensive than estimated. Hardly anyone mentions immigrants' impact, because it seems insensitive.

Meanwhile, the health-care proposals would impose substantial costs. Remember: The country already faces huge increases in federal spending and taxes or deficits because an aging population will receive more Social Security and Medicare. Projections the Congressional Budget Office made in 2007 suggested that federal spending might rise almost 50 percent by 2030 as a share of the economy (gross domestic product). Since that estimate, the recession and massive deficits have further bloated the national debt.

Obama's plan might add almost an additional \$1 trillion in spending over a decade -- and more later. Even if this is fully covered, as Obama contends, by higher taxes and cuts in Medicare reimbursements, this revenue could have been

used to cut the existing deficits. But the odds are that the new spending isn't fully covered, because Congress might reverse some Medicare reductions before they take effect. Projected savings seem "unrealistic," says Foster. Similarly, the legislation creates a voluntary long-term care insurance program that's supposedly paid by private premiums. Foster suspects it's "unsustainable," suggesting a need for big federal subsidies.

Obama's overhaul would also change how private firms insure workers. Perhaps 18 million workers could lose coverage and 16 million gain it, as companies adapt to new regulations and subsidies, estimates the Lewin Group, a consulting firm. Private insurers argue that premiums in the individual and small-group markets, where many workers would end up, might rise an extra 25 to 50 percent over a decade. The administration and the CBO disagree. The dispute underlines the bills' immense uncertainties. As for cost control, even generous estimates have health spending growing faster than the economy. Changing that is the first imperative of sensible policy.

So Obama's plan amounts to this: partial coverage of the uninsured; modest improvements (possibly) in their health; sizable budgetary costs worsening a bleak outlook; significant, unpredictable changes in insurance markets; weak spending control. This is a bad bargain. Health benefits are overstated, long-term economic costs understated. The country would be the worse for this legislation's passage. What it's become is an exercise in political symbolism: Obama's self-indulgent crusade to seize the liberal holy grail of "universal coverage." What it's not is leadership.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/20/AR2009122002127.html>

Jane Hamsher, Grover Norquist Call For Rahm Emanuel's Resignation

December 23, 2009

Attorney General of the United States of America
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Holder:

We write to demand an immediate investigation into the activities of White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel. We believe there is an abundant public record which establishes that the actions of the White House have blocked any investigation into his activities while on the board of Freddie Mac from 2000-2001, and facilitated the cover up of potential malfeasance until the 10-year statute of limitations has run out.

The purpose of this letter is to connect the dots to establish both the conduct of Mr. Emanuel and those working with him to thwart inquiry, and to support your acting speedily so that the statute of limitations does not run out before the Justice Department is able to empanel a grand jury.

The New York Times reports that the administration is negotiating to double the commitments to Fannie and Freddie for a total of \$800 billion by December 31, in order to avoid the congressional approval that would be needed after that date. But there currently is no Inspector General exercising independent oversight of these entities. Acting Inspector General Ed Kelly was stripped of his authority earlier this year by the Justice Department, relying on a loophole in a bill Mr. Emanuel cosponsored and pushed through Congress shortly before he left for the White House. This effectively ended Mr. Kelly's investigation into what happened at Fannie and Freddie.

Since that time, despite multiple warnings by Congress that having no independent Inspector General for a federal agency that oversees \$6 trillion in mortgages is a serious oversight, the White House has not appointed one.

We recognize that these are extremely serious accusations, but the stonewalling by Mr. Emanuel and the White House has left us with no other redress. A 2003 report by Freddie Mac's regulator indicated that Freddie Mac executives had informed the board of their intention to misstate the earnings to insure their own bonuses during the time Mr. Emanuel was a director. But the White House refused to comply with a Freedom of Information Act request from the Chicago Tribune for those board minutes on the grounds that Freddie Mac was a "commercial" entity, even though it was wholly owned by the government at the time the request was made.

If the Treasury approves the \$800 billion commitment to Fannie and Freddie by the end of the year, it will mean that under the influence of Rahm Emanuel, the White House is moving a trillion-dollar slush fund into corruption-riddled companies with no oversight in place. This will allow Fannie and Freddie to continue to purchase more toxic assets from banks, acting as a back-door increase of the TARP without congressional approval.

Before the White House commits any more money to Fannie and Freddie, we call on the Public Integrity Section in the Justice Department to begin an investigation into the cause of Fannie and Freddie's conservatorship, into Rahm Emanuel's activities on the board of Freddie Mac (including any violations of his fiduciary duties to shareholders), into the decision-making behind the continued vacancy of Fannie and Freddie's Inspector General post, and into potential public corruption by Rahm Emanuel in connection with his time in Congress, in the White House, and on the board of Freddie Mac.

We also call for the immediate appointment of an Inspector General with a complete remit to go after this information.

We both come from differing political ideologies. One of us is the conservative head of a transparency foundation, and the other is the publisher of a liberal political blog. But we make common cause today out of grave concern for the future of our country in the wake of corruption-riddled bailouts. These bailouts continue to rob Main Street to benefit Wall Street, and, because of that, we together demand the resignation of Mr. Emanuel, a man who has steadfastly worked to obstruct both oversight and inquiry into the matter. Rahm Emanuel's conflicts of interest render him far too compromised to serve as gatekeeper to the President of the United States.

We will lay out the details further below, and are available at your earliest convenience to meet with you directly.

Sincerely,

Jane Hamsher,
Grover Norquist

Background information:

Rahm Emanuel was appointed to the board of Freddie Mac in February of 2000 by Bill Clinton, after serving as White House political director where he was a vocal defender of Mr. Clinton during the Monica Lewinski matter. He served there until leaving to run for Congress in 2001, which qualified him for \$380,000 in stock and options and a \$20,000 annual fee.

According to the Chicago Tribune, during his tenure the board was notified by executives of their plans to misstate the earnings of Freddie Mac: "On Emanuel's watch, the board was told by

executives of a plan to use accounting tricks to mislead shareholders about outsize profits the government-chartered firm was then reaping from risky investments. The goal was to push earnings onto the books in future years, ensuring that Freddie Mac would appear profitable on paper for years to come and helping maximize annual bonuses for company brass." (3/5/2009)

The Tribune further reported that "during his brief time on the board, the company hatched a plan to enhance its political muscle. That scheme, also reviewed by the board, led to a record \$3.8 million fine from the Federal Election Commission for illegally using corporate resources to host fundraisers for politicians. Emanuel was the beneficiary of one of those parties after he left the board and ran in 2002 for a seat in Congress from the North Side of Chicago."

In December 2003, a report (PDF) was written by Armando Falcon Jr., head of the entity charged with oversight of Freddie Mac, the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight (OFHEO). The report asserts that company executives "demanded whatever level of earnings management was necessary to achieve steady rapid growth in Enterprise profits." It also "provided evidence that non-executive members of the Board were aware, and supportive of, management in this regard, including the use of derivatives to improperly manage the earnings of Freddie Mac," citing notes from a June 2, 2000 meeting of the Board of Directors (p. 24).

The OFHEO report concluded that board had "failed in its duty to follow up on matters brought to its attention." The SEC filed a complaint (PDF) saying that Freddie Mac had "misreported profits by billions of dollars in order to deceive investors between the years of 2000 and 2002," per ABC News.

In Congress, Rahm Emanuel worked to pass a bailout of Fannie and Freddie, cosponsoring the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008,

which also dissolved OFHEO. It moved their regulatory authority to the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), which took Fannie and Freddie under conservatorship in September 2008. The same act abolished the Federal Housing Finance Board (FHFB) and replaced it with the FHFA.

After Mr. Emanuel was named Chief of Staff, the White House denied a Chicago Tribune Freedom of Information Act request for information on his Freddie Mac activities: "The Obama administration rejected a Tribune request under the Freedom of Information Act to review Freddie Mac board minutes and correspondence during Emanuel's time as a director. The documents, obtained by Falcon for his investigation, were "commercial information" exempt from disclosure, according to a lawyer for the Federal Housing Finance Agency." However, at the time of the request Freddie Mac was no longer a "commercial" enterprise, having been taken over by the government in September of 2008.

According to ABC News, the Justice Department is in possession of these records, yet no indictments have been forthcoming: "Freddie Mac records have been subpoenaed by the Justice Department as part of its investigation of the suspect accounting procedures" they reported in November 2008.

When the OFHEO and the FHFB were abolished, FHFB employees were automatically transferred to the FHFA and retained their "same status, tenure, grade, and pay." Ed Kelly, who had been the Inspector General for the FHFB, was looking into the wrongdoing of Fannie and Freddie at the FHFB when the Justice Department, using the authority of the 2008 law Emanuel cosponsored, stripped him of Inspector General authority and removed him from oversight of Fannie and Freddie.

The Huffington Post obtained copies of an internal memo (PDF) on the ruling by the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. They report that "the ruling came in response to a request from the Federal Housing Finance Agency itself - which means that a federal agency essentially succeeded in getting rid of its own inspector general."

The memo states that "Congress did not intend for the FHFA to have an Acting or interim IG pending the confirmation of a PAS IG." But according to the Huffington Post, "the chairmen of the House and Senate banking committees, Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), both told HuffPost that Congress had no intention whatsoever of revoking Kelley's authority to operate as an IG."

According to Neil Barofsky, the Special Inspector General overseeing the TARP bank bailout: "It's a serious gap in oversight," Barofsky told HuffPost of Ed Kelley's loss. "It does impact what we do. Ed was a member of our TARP IG council and a partner in our investigative work." Barofsky said he still investigates areas of FHFA, but his mandate only covers "a sliver of what they do."

The Huffington Post further reports that it is the White House's failure to appoint an Inspector General that has stalled the process: "Federal Housing Finance Agency officials insist[] that they notified Congress about the problem and pressed the Obama administration "multiple times" to appoint someone to the position tasked with rooting out wrongdoing at Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan Bank," they report.

In addition to his role as White House Chief of Staff, Mr. Emanuel is heavily involved in decisions made by the Treasury Department. The Wall Street Journal reported in May that "Rahm wants it" has become an unofficial mantra in the Department. It is therefore of grave concern that the New York Times reports the Treasury is

negotiating to increase their commitment to Fannie and Freddie, in the absence of independent oversight: "Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which buy and resell mortgages, have used \$112 billion - including \$15 billion for Fannie in November - of a total \$400 billion pledge from the Treasury. Now, according to people close to the talks, officials are discussing the possibility of increasing that commitment, possibly to \$400 billion for each company, by year-end, after which the Treasury would need Congressional approval to extend it. Company and government officials declined to comment."

This is taken from:

<http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2009/12/jane-hamsher-grover-norquist-call-for-rahm-emanuel%E2%80%99s-resignation.html>

22nd Annual Awards for this Year's Worst Reporting

The Coronation of the Messiah Award for Fawning Inaugural Coverage

"We know that wind can make a cold day feel colder, but can national pride make a freezing day feel warmer? It seems to be the case because regardless of the final crowd number estimates, never have so many people shivered so long with such joy. From above, even the seagulls must have been awed by the blanket of humanity."
- ABC's Bill Weir on World News, January 20.

Runner Up:

"What a day it was. It may take days or years to really absorb the significance of what happened to America today....When he [Barack Obama] finally emerged, he seemed, even in this throng, so solitary, somber, perhaps already feeling the weight of the world, even before he was transformed into the leader of the free world....The mass flickering of cell phone cameras

on the Mall seemed like stars shining back at him."

- NBC's Andrea Mitchell on the January 20 Nightly News.

Master of His Domain Award for Obama Puffery

"The legislative achievements have been stupendous - the \$789 billion stimulus bill, the budget plan that is still being hammered out (and may, ultimately, include the next landmark safety-net program, universal health insurance). There has also been a cascade of new policies to address the financial crisis - massive interventions in the housing and credit markets, a market-based plan to buy the toxic assets that many banks have on their books, a plan to bail out the auto industry and a strict new regulatory regime proposed for Wall Street. Obama has also completely overhauled foreign policy, from Cuba to Afghanistan. 'In a way, Obama's 100 days is even more dramatic than Roosevelt's,' says Elaine Kamarck of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. 'Roosevelt only had to deal with a domestic crisis. Obama has had to overhaul foreign policy as well, including two wars. And that's really the secret of why this has seemed so spectacular.'"

- Time's Joe Klein in the magazine's May 4 cover story on Barack Obama's first 100 days as President.

The Crush Rush Award for Loathing Limbaugh

"The type of female that does like Rush is the same type of woman that falls in love with prisoners. You know what I mean? They like Richard Ramirez or - Squeaky Fromme is a good example. I think Charles Manson's - Eva Braun, Hitler's girlfriend. That is exactly the type of woman that responds really well to Rush. And there will be some Eva Brauns, Squeaky Frommes out there that will respond really well to this cattle call right now."

- Actress/activist Janeane Garofalo on MSNBC's Countdown with Keith Olbermann, February 26.

Runner up:

"Rush Limbaugh is beginning to look more and more like Mr. Big, and at some point somebody's going to jam a CO2 pellet into his head and he's going to explode like a giant blimp. That day may come. Not yet, but we'll be there to watch."

- Chris Matthews on MSNBC's Morning Meeting, October 13.

Damn Those Conservatives Award

"The Republicans lie! They want to see you dead! They'd rather make money off your dead corpse! They kind of like it when that woman has cancer and they don't have anything for her."

- Ed Schultz, host of MSNBC's The Ed Show, September 23.

Runners-up:

"...the total mindless, morally bankrupt, knee-jerk, fascistic hatred - without which Michelle Malkin would just be a big mashed-up bag of meat with lipstick on it."

- Countdown host Keith Olbermann talking about the conservative columnist and author, October 13.

"The tenets of the Republican Party are amazing and they seem warm and welcome. But when I watch it be applied - like you didn't have to go much further than the Republican National Convention....It literally look[s] like Nazi Germany."

- CNN host/comedian D.L. Hughley to RNC Chairman Michael Steele on D.L. Hughley Breaks the News, February 28.

The Poison Tea Pot Award for Smearing the Anti-Obama Rabble

CNN analyst David Gergen: "Republicans are pretty much in disarray.... They have not yet come up with a compelling alternative, one that has gained popular recognition. So-"

Anchor Anderson Cooper: "Teabagging. They've got teabagging."

Gergen: "Well, they've got the teabagging....[But] Republicans have got a way - they still haven't found their voice, Anderson. They're still - this happens to a minority party after it's lost a couple of bad elections, but they're searching for their voice."

Cooper: "It's hard to talk when you're teabagging."

- CNN's Anderson Cooper 360, April 14.
"Teabagging" is a vulgar slang term for a certain variety of oral sex; Cooper later apologized.

Runners-up:

"Let's be very honest about what this is about. It's not about bashing Democrats, it's not about taxes, they have no idea what the Boston tea party was about, they don't know their history at all. This is about hating a black man in the White House. This is racism straight up. That is nothing but a bunch of teabagging rednecks....Fox News loves to foment this anti-intellectualism because that's their bread and butter. If you have a cerebral electorate, Fox News goes down the toilet, you know, very, very fast....They have tackled that elusive...Klan with a 'K' demo."

- Actress/activist Janeane Garofalo on MSNBC's Countdown, April 16.

"You know, Kyra, this is a party for Obama bashers. I have to say that this is not entirely representative of everybody in America....It's anti-government, anti-CNN, since this is highly promoted by the right wing conservative network, Fox. And since I can't really hear much more and I think this is not really family viewing, I'll toss it back to you."

- Correspondent Susan Roesgen during live coverage of the tea party protests, CNN Newsroom, April 15.

"They've waved signs likening President Obama to Hitler and the devil; raised questions about whether he was really born in this country; falsely accused him of planning to set up death panels; decried his speech to students as indoctrination; and called him everything from a 'fascist' to a 'socialist' to a 'communist.' ...And all that was before Mr. Obama's speech was interrupted by a representative who once fought to keep the Confederate flag waving over the South Carolina state house. Add it all up, and some prominent Obama supporters are now saying that it paints a picture of an opposition driven, in part, by a refusal to accept a black President."

- ABC's Dan Harris on World News, September 15.

Spread the Wealth Award for Socialist Sermonizing

"Why not just nationalize the banks?...People are angry. There's so much taxpayer money going into the banks. Why shouldn't the government - why shouldn't you just fire the executives who wrecked these banks in the first place and tanked the world's financial system in the process?"

- ABC's Terry Moran interviewing President Obama for Nightline, February 10.

Runner-up:

"In Britain, a government takeover of a bank last year helped to temporarily calm fears in the financial markets there. Nationalization may have a psychological impact as well, and Uncle Sam wrapping his arms around failing banks in this country might provide a big dose of confidence for the American consumer."

- Katie Couric on the February 19 CBS Evening News, talking about the Obama administration possibly taking over American banks.

The Half-Baked Alaska Award for Pummeling Palin

CNN's Jack Cafferty: "Here's the question: 'Would you rather listen to a speech by Sarah Palin or a

speech by Newt Gingrich?' Go to CNN - or would you rather just stick needles in your eyes? [Over loud laughter off-camera from a man other than Cafferty, presumably Blitzer] Go to CNN.com/CaffertyFile and you can post a comment on my blog. I forgot about the third option."

Anchor Wolf Blitzer: "What do you think, Jack? You want to listen to Palin or Gingrich deliver a speech?"

Cafferty: "I'm not interested in listening to either one of them."

- Exchange on CNN's The Situation Room, June 9, talking about Palin and Gingrich's appearance at a Republican fundraiser the previous evening.

Runners-up:

Ex-MSNBC anchor Dan Abrams: "Sarah Palin, to me, is like the representative of everything that's gone wrong [for the Republican Party] lately."

Comedian Chuck Nice: "Yeah, she's a maverick!...And I'm going to say this, and please don't take it the way it sounds. But, Sarah Palin to the GOP, this is what I've got to say: She is very much like herpes - she's not going away. Okay? That's it."

- Exchange on NBC's Today, June 9.

"She's a joke. I mean, I just can't take her seriously....The idea that this potential talk show host is considered seriously for the Republican nomination, believe me, it'll never happen. Republican primary voters just are not going to elect a talk show host."

- New York Times columnist David Brooks talking about Sarah Palin on ABC's This Week, November 15.

The Un-Fairness Doctrine Award for Slamming Media Conservatives

"Let me be precise here: Fox News peddles a fair amount of hateful crap. Some of it borders on sedition. Much of it is flat out untrue. But I don't understand why the White House would give such poisonous helium balloons as Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity the opportunity for still greater spasms of self-inflation by declaring war on Fox....The best antidote to their garbage is elegant, intelligent governance."

- Time's Joe Klein on the magazine's "Swampland" blog, October 23.

Let Us Fluff Your Pillow Award for Obsequious Obama Interviews

"You're so confident, Mr. President, and so focused. Is your confidence ever shaken? Do you ever wake up and say, 'Damn, this is hard. Damn, I'm not going to get the things done I want to get done, and it's just too politicized to really get accomplished the big things I want to accomplish'?"

- CBS's Katie Couric in an exchange with Obama shown on The Early Show, July 22.

Barry's Big Brain Award for Journalists Bedazzled by Obama's Brilliance

"I like to say that, in some ways, Barack Obama is the first President since George Washington to be taking a step down into the Oval Office. I mean, from visionary leader of a giant movement, now he's got an executive position that he has to perform in, in a way."

- ABC Nightline co-anchor Terry Moran to Media Bistro's Steve Krakauer in a February 20 "Morning Media Menu" podcast.

Runners-up

"The President showed his analytical mind....He was at his best intellectually. I thought it was a great example of how his mind works....What a mind he has, and I love his ability to do it on television. I love to think with him."

- MSNBC's Chris Matthews during live coverage following Obama's February 9 press conference.

"Spock's cool, analytical nature feels more fascinating and topical than ever now that we've put a sort of Vulcan in the White House. All through the election campaign, columnists compared President Obama's unflappably logical demeanor and prominent ears with Mr. Spock's....Like Obama, Spock is the product of a mixed marriage (actually, an interstellar mixed marriage), and he suffers blunt manifestations of prejudice as a result...."

- Newsweek's Steve Daly in his May 4 cover story, "We're All Trekkies Now."

"People who brief him say he is able to game out scenarios before the experts in the room, even on foreign policy, national security and other issues in which he had relatively little expertise before running for president. Obama is approaching the issues as a game of 'three-dimensional chess,' said John O. Brennan, an assistant to the President for homeland security and counterterrorism. 'It's not kinetic checkers....There are moves that are made on the chess board that really have implications, so the President is always looking at those dimensions of it.'"

- Carrie Johnson and Anne E. Kornblut in a front-page Washington Post story, August 28.

The Audacity of Dopes Award for Wackiest Analysis of the Year

"Reagan [at the 1984 D-Day commemoration] was all about America, and you talked about it. Obama is, 'We are above that now. We're not just parochial, we're not just chauvinistic, we're not just provincial. We stand for something.' I mean, in a way, Obama's standing above the country, above - above the world. He's sort of God. He's going to bring all different sides together."

- Newsweek's Evan Thomas to host Chris Matthews on MSNBC's Hardball, June 5.

Runners-up

"We have an FBI, and we're not prejudiced against somebody who's worked at the FBI. It's an honorable place to work. And the KGB, I think, was an honorable place to work. It gave people in the former Soviet Union, a communist country, an opportunity to do something important and worthwhile."

- CNN founder Ted Turner on Meet the Press, November 30, 2008.

"[Ted Kennedy] just wanted to bring back what Bobby and Jack had given us. He wanted to be his brother's brother. And then he turned that torch over last year to Barack Obama....Amazing history. Barack is now the last brother. It's history."

- MSNBC's Chris Matthews on NBC's Today, August 26.

The Obamagasm Award for Seeing Coolness In Everything Obama Does

Correspondent John Harwood: "He had this fly that was persistently buzzing around him....He swatted his hand and he said, 'I got the sucker.' He threw it onto the ground. It was a, you know, Dirty Harry 'make my day' moment."...

MSNBC anchor David Shuster: "Amazing...An amazing interview....It never fails - great weather, rainbows, incredible speeches, and three-point basket. A fly and he nails it. Unbelievable. Unbelievable."

- Exchange on MSNBC after Harwood's CNBC interview with President Obama concluded, June 16.

Runners-up

"The other night I dreamt of Barack Obama. He was taking a shower right when I needed to get

into the bathroom to shave my legs....I launched an e-mail inquiry....Many women - not too surprisingly - were dreaming about sex with the President."

- New York Times "Domestic Disturbances" blogger Judith Warner in a February 5 posting.

"Between workouts during his Hawaii vacation this week, he was photographed looking like the paradigm of a new kind of presidential fitness, one geared less toward preventing heart attacks than winning swimsuit competitions. The sun glinted off chiseled pectorals sculpted during four weightlifting sessions each week, and a body toned by regular treadmill runs and basketball games."

- Washington Post reporter Eli Saslow in a December 25, 2008 front-page story about Obama's vacation fitness regimen.

"When they were both walking to the helicopter the other day, Marine One... you could tell, like, they were experiencing the - I'm getting old here - the grooviness, the excitement of being this first American couple heading towards Marine One, which is cool in itself, heading from there to Air Force One, to a quick flight across the Atlantic, on your own plane, and to meet with the world leaders as, like, the centerpiece of the world....I'm saying it again, I'm getting a thrill....We agree, we girls agree. I don't mind saying that. I'm excited. I'm thrilled."

- MSNBC's Chris Matthews talking to Michelle Bernard of the Independent Women's Forum and Washington Post writer Lois Romano about the Obamas' trip to Europe, April 1 Hardball.

Michelle, the Media Belle Award

Correspondent Dawna Friesen: "Her husband is, of course, the big star of the show, but this is Michelle Obama's first foray on to the global stage as First Lady. And you can bet that her every move, her every fashion decision will be dissected and analyzed, especially when the

couple go to meet the Queen. But she's got a lot of good will on her side."

Video of Michelle Obama shown as Andy Williams sings: "You're just too good to be true/Can't take my eyes off of you."

Friesen, as song continues playing in background: "Ask the British about Michelle Obama, and you'll hear a lot of what you hear in the states."

Woman on the street: "Oh, I think she's really cool. She's got a lot of really good styles. It makes a change from politicians' wives to look good."

Man on the street: "She looks supportive and that's what a man needs in life."

Second man: "I have been totally stunned at the awesome nature of Michelle Obama."...

Friesen: "Then there's those arms, the envy of a lot of British women...."

- NBC's Today, March 31. [MP3 Audio (0:58)]

Runners-up

"Michelle is so authentic, and so real, and so today, and so, you know, J. Crew, and the whole price point thing and not designer clothes....With Michelle, you can almost feel those warm arms. You know, there's a kind of real red-blooded feel to her. But there's also - I mean she's almost, like, overtaking Oprah, I think, as the kind of inspirational 'it' girl at this point."

- Former Vanity Fair and New Yorker editor Tina Brown on CBS's Early Show, April 3.

"In 1961, when Jacqueline Kennedy came to Europe, she enchanted even the crustiest of world leaders, and she's remained a tough act to follow for every First Lady since. But Michelle Obama looks more than equal to the task of impressing and delighting even the grandest of them....To be honest, most Europeans were going to like whoever replaced President Bush. But

there's no doubt Michelle and her husband have an extra je ne sais quoi."

- CBS's Elizabeth Palmer on The Early Show, March 31.

Media Hero Award

"I'm honored to be joined today by the Godfather of Green, the King of Conservation: Former Vice President Al Gore."

- Katie Couric opening her November 2 "@KatieCouric" CBSNews.com webcast.

Runners-up:

"The Thinking Man's Thinking Man: Al Gore's New Plan for the Planet."

- Cover of the November 9 Newsweek.

"This woman has a life story that you couldn't make up! I mean, you know, she's born in the public projects, in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, a single parent household, she goes to a Catholic school, she gets scholarships to the best schools in the country, Princeton and Yale, she overcomes all that while dealing with diabetes all her life, and she is Hispanic....This was the political advisor's dream candidate."

- CBS's Bob Schieffer during live coverage of Obama's selection of Judge Sonia Sotomayor for the Supreme Court, May 26.

The Barbra Streisand Political IQ Award for Celebrity Vapidity

Actor Denis Leary: "I do have to say that I think that President Obama is the greatest President in the history of all of our Presidents, and that he can do no wrong in my book. So how's that for prejudice on the Democratic side?"...

Fill-in host Joy Behar: "What do you think of Obama's pick of Sotomayor?"

Leary: "Fantastic!"

Behar: "You love her?"

Leary: "Everything you ask me about President Obama I'm just going to say it's the greatest thing ever. I love the guy!"

- Exchange on CNN's Larry King Live, May 29.

Runners-up

"The word, 'zoo,' is sort of elephant-speak for Guantanamo. They're really, they are suffering and being tortured."

- Actress Lily Tomlin at an animal-rights protest in Los Angeles, clip shown on NBC's Today, December 4, 2008.

"I have a crush on Jimmy Carter. I admit it. He has an extraordinary mind. He's an exceptional human being. And he writes poetry, for crying out loud. He's all good things."

- Actress Renee Zellweger, January 30 USA Today.

"We've lived through a nightmare...in the past eight years....We're going through something that we haven't gone through in my life. Foreign policy, domestic policy - driven to its breaking point. Everything got broken. And the philosophy that was at the base of the last administration has ruined many, many people's lives. The deregulation, the idea of the unfettered, free market, the blind foreign policy. This was a very radical group of people who pushed things in a very radical direction, had great success at moving things in that direction, and we are suffering the consequences."

- Singer Bruce Springsteen in an interview with producer Mark Hagen published January 18 in Britain's The Observer.

This is taken from:

<http://mrc.org/notablequotables/bestof/2009/default.aspx> (there are 16 awards with several runners up for each award)

Links

Transvestites, Mao, and Obama-on-Mount-Rushmore bulbs Decorate White House Christmas Tree:

<http://biggovernment.com/2009/12/22/transvestites-mao-and-obama-decorate-white-house-christmas-tree/>

Schwarzenegger Seeks Obama's Help for Deficit Relief (because, of course it makes sense for fiscally irresponsible states to be bailed out by fiscally responsible states):

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aKc0QT2U7Gc0>

Record-setting snowfall in Oklahoma:

<http://www.news9.com/Global/story.asp?S=11726617>

Carbon emissions out of Copenhagen:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5BD4D020091214>

Democrat Pete Defazio challenged by the White House:



Additional Sources

Saudis will allow Israel the airspace to fly through in order to attack Iran (this is actually from a few months back).

<http://www.drudge.com/archive/122757/report-saudis-give-nod-israel-strike>

<http://www.infowars.com/saudis-give-israel-fly-over-permission-to-attack-iran/>

Harry Reid on what the healthcare bill is really all about:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/73255-reid-fires-back-at-charges-that-healthcare-bill-contains-sweetheart-deals>

<http://thehill.com/homenews/house/72889-pe-losi-rahm-do-not-scare-rep-defazio>

The Rush Section

The Private Sector Under Siege

RUSH: Everybody is wondering, "So, Rush, what happens now when they have to reconcile the Senate bill with the House bill?" 'Cause the House bill has a public option and the Senate bill has the Medicare buy-in, and the House bill has a lot more stuff that was taken out of the Senate bill. And, of course, people we can no longer trust anymore, like Ben Nelson, are saying, "If anything

in the Senate bill changes, my vote is no." Now, Nancy Pelosi has said that she will sign anything; she'll get anything through there. I think my best guess is that the House will bite the bullet on this, ramrod this thing through, 'cause, remember, this is just the starter house on the way to building the big health care mansion. Let me remind you of something else, ladies and gentlemen. There is a companion bill in the House that I want to put in context of David Axelrod saying, (paraphrasing) "Hey, look, Howard Dean ought to be very happy. We're essentially destroying the insurance companies here. We're going to limit CEO pay, and we're going to make sure that they don't spend wildly on administrative costs and shareholder profits are held in check." Fascism, folks, privately owned but run by the government.

Now, remember, insurance companies only average a little over a 2% profit last year. So his promises to rein in the profits of Big Insurance ring a little hollow. All you can do here is make sure that they end up with no profit, and then you'll have to order them to stay in business, or gladly accept their going out of business and then hello public option, and I'm sure that's what they're going to tell the people in the House, "Just give us time, give us time, we knew it would be ten years before we'd get a full-fledged public option in there, full-fledged single pay payer, so just be patient with us." The companion bill in the House -- and Barney Frank keeps talking about this, I mean he's very proud of it. The financial regulations bill, the overhaul of the regulatory system for the nation's financial community, allows the government to shut down any business, be it healthy or not, that they deem to provide a risk to the economy. Remember, now, Democrats and Obama are running around saying, (paraphrasing) "We need to build a new economic cycle so that the kinds of things that happened last year, a year ago, do not happen, and for that to happen we must take the risk out of anything Wall Street or anywhere else, with the banks, anywhere within the financial system."

So if they see a successful company that's doing gangbusters, but they still think that if that company failed at some point, that that would cause bad things, they can shut the company down or they can go in and run it. Now, you put that side by side with what Axelrod here is touting as a way for Howard Dean and the left radicals to be happy, "Look what we're doing to the insurance companies? We're destroying them." It's a little microcosm. So these guys are setting up the circumstance where every aspect of the American private sector will be under their control, even to the point of being able to shut down a company simply on the basis that it, in their opinion, is too risky as it is currently operated. Well, why didn't they shut down Fannie Mae? Why didn't they shut down Freddie Mac? Because they control them! That's how they were able to get the subprime mortgage thing going, that's how they were able to get their constituents loans and in houses for which they would never have to pay.

Frank Rich, his column yesterday, "Tiger Woods, Person of the Year." Now, it's a little sarcastic here. Tiger Woods, according to Frank Rich, should be the Person of the Year because he represents all the sham of the last decade. What we have in Frank Rich's view is Tiger Woods as George W. Bush. He turns out to be nothing like how he was portrayed. Now, I would like to say to Frank Rich: Mark my words, Mr. Rich, just as Tiger Woods was unmasked as representing nothing the way he was portrayed, so shall that happen to President Obama. It will happen in due course. The parallels are amazing. The press and interested parties created a perfect person in Tiger Woods, absolutely perfect. This was done to maximize value in the corporate endorsement world, as well as to help the PGA Tour and a number of other places. And we've now learned that nothing that we were told was true. Barack Obama, the same. He has had a career of five minutes, maybe ten now when you add this year to his life. A ten-minute career, most of it spent in words, most of it spent reading teleprompters

with a godlike echo behind his voice in most of his speeches.

Following his speech at the Democrat convention of 2004 we started getting puff pieces midway through 2006 about what a great figure, messianic, why, we had never before in the history of American politics seen a man or politician like this, a man who was to transcend race, transcend partisanship, transcend standard politics, and, by the way, I'd like to go back and ask David "Rodham" Gergen, who's all upset because no Republicans voted for this and it's the biggest social entitlement ever in American history and it doesn't have the support of one of the political parties, this is horrible -- of course he's blaming Republicans for this -- but I thought Obama was going to end all this. I thought President Obama was going to be the end of this kind of partisanship, the end of racism. But hell's bells, if you criticize Obama on anything you are racist. That's the only reason you criticize it.

Frank Rich starts his piece: "As we say farewell to a dreadful year and decade, this much we can agree upon: The person of the year is not Ben Bernanke." No, no, no, no. "If there's been a consistent narrative to this year and every other in this decade, it's that most of us, Bernanke included, have been so easily bamboozled. The men who played us for suckers, whether at Citigroup or Fannie Mae, at the White House or Ted Haggard's megachurch, are the real movers and shakers of this century's history so far. That's why the obvious person of the year is Tiger Woods. His sham beatific image, questioned by almost no one until it collapsed, is nothing if not the farcical reductio ad absurdum of the decade's flimflams, from the cancerous (the subprime mortgage) to the inane (balloon boy)."

How do you mention this, how do you write this with any integrity without mentioning Barack Obama, who is flimflam and phony, and there's nobody who knows anything about him, nobody really knows who he is. In fact, the people that he

did hang around with, the people who did mentor him, the people who influenced him and educated him we're all told he never heard them. Bill Ayers just friend down the street, (imitating Obama) "I didn't know he blew up the Pentagon, that was a long time ago." He never heard a word Reverend Wright said in 20 years sitting in the pew of the church. Frank Marshall Davis, a communist friend of his families back in -- (interruption) yeah, we know he heard Frank Marshall Davis because he loves him, he's written about him, but all that we were told to ignore and instead rely on the farcical image that has been created, the puff piece image that has been created by the American media.

Chris Dodd, ladies and gentlemen, there's a mysterious hundred million dollars people found in the health care bill. By now you've probably heard about the mystery appropriation, a hundred million research medical facility buried in the Senate's health care reform bill. It's for Chris Dodd. Headline, it's from an amused Associated Press: "Dodd Gets \$100 Million For UConn Health Center Put In Bill," U-Conn, University of Connecticut. But what a name for what's happened to all of us, U-Conn. "A \$100 million item for construction of a university hospital was inserted in the Senate health care bill at the request of Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., who faces a difficult re-election campaign." Slush fund, anybody? Where do you think this money is coming from? How about from the Porkulus bill? You think those will be the funds that will be used for it or the unspent TARP money? We've got slush money all over the place voted by the Congress one year ago and almost one year ago for just this kind of thing. And Mr. Dodd's office is actually proud of this achievement.

"The legislation leaves it up to the Health and Human Services Department to decide where the money should be spent, although spokesman Bryan DeAngelis said Dodd hopes to claim it for the University of Connecticut." How coy. And Russ Feingold -- this is from the Huffing and

Puffington Post -- "Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.) formally announced on Sunday that he would support the Senate's final version of health care reform. But in doing so he cast blame for the loss of a public option for insurance coverage partially," on the Obama administration. Here's a statement: "I've been fighting all year for a strong public option to compete with the insurance industry and bring health care spending down. I continued that fight during recent negotiations, and I refused to sign onto a deal to drop the public option from the Senate bill. Unfortunately, the lack of support from the administration made keeping the public option in the bill an uphill struggle. Removing the public option from the Senate bill is the wrong move, and eliminates \$25 billion in savings. I will be urging members of the House and Senate who draft the final bill to make sure this essential provision is included."

The final bill will probably be the Senate bill. If this goes to a conference it may all fall apart, and I guarantee you they're not going to let that happen. They are not going to let that happen. But Feingold, there's no other way to describe this whole notion that the insurance companies need competition than utterly stupid and ignorant of the market system. If you want competition in the insurance companies, let them sell insurance across state lines. There are 17,000 insurance companies out there of all different sizes and types. The idea that a public option, a government-run insurance plan would provide them competition? All it would do is put 'em out of business because a government-run insurance company does not have to show a profit, a government-run insurance company could underprice things on purpose to put 'em out of business and to get all employers shuffling their coverage off of their own books onto the government's. If these guys would just be patient, Howard Dean and all the rest, if they would just be patient, they could be made to understand how they're going to get everything they want provided they can hold onto their majorities in the House and Senate next November.

RUSH: Why don't we just solve all of our problems like we're solving the problem of health care insurance coverage? I mean this health care reform really shows us how foolish we've been when facing our problems in the past by tweaking around the edges instead of taking them head on. You say 40 million Americans are uninsured, well, hell's bells, we could fix that. We're just going to pass a law requiring everybody to buy health care insurance. Why didn't we think of that sooner? How many trillions of dollars have we wasted on the war on poverty? Why didn't we just make poverty against the law? Anyone earning under the poverty level will have to pay a fine or go to jail. Fifteen million people unemployed, throw them in jail if they won't work. Solvy dolvy. I mean we're just going to with the stroke a pen sign a law and fix the problem, look how easy it could be.

We don't have to spend \$2.5 trillion, create 111 new bureaucracies, 2,000 pages of legislation just to make people buy insurance. That's what we've got here because essentially that's all we're doing, we're making everybody buy insurance, or put 'em in jail or fine them if they don't, and we're doing that with 2,000 pages of legislation, 111 new bureaucracies, and two-and-a-half trillion taxpayer dollars? All you have to do is add a line or two to the tax code to fix this the way they're going about it. But, see, that's our Congress for you. They don't want things to be simple. And it proves looking at it that way that this is not about health insurance, it's not about insuring everybody because this bill doesn't do that even after 15 or 20 years. This is about power and control, confiscating one-sixth of the US private sector. Here's Dingy Harry this afternoon. Democrats are having a press conference, Senate Democrats are. Here is a portion of what Dingy Harry had to say.

REID: Like those in the medical field, our responsibility as legislators is to cure for all people, not just those that are fortunate. That's what this historic reform fixes. It starts to break

down the wall between a class of Americans who can afford to stay healthy and another that cannot.

RUSH: What an outrage. That is not your job. And he starts to break down the walls, this is just the beginning. Our responsibility as legislators is to care for all people, not just those that are fortunate, that's the whole class envy thing again. They're figuring that saying things like this, most people are not wealthy, most people are middle class, and that's how they attempt to get the middle class on board, "Hey, we're doing this for you and we're going to punish the rich in the process, and that's why you should support it." That's worked somewhat in the past, not nearly as well as everybody thinks, but it's not going to work this time because everybody knows that's not what this bill is. This bill punishes everybody, mandates that everybody do something. It's an insult. All of this is just a full-fledged insult. But they are being who they are. If you wonder what's going on, you're watching liberalism, progressivism, radical leftism, whatever you want to call it, you're watching it full-fledged, out in the open, no disguises.

Ideas Will Matter Most in 2010

RUSH: Here's Alan in, Holmdel, New Jersey. Great to have you on the phone, sir. I'm glad you waited.

CALLER: Thank you, Rush. Yeah, I'm calling because people need to get involved in the 2010 congressional elections right now because this is the time when elections will be won and lost, because, remember, a lot of these challenges are going to be going up against incumbents with multimillion-dollar war chests. So to wait until the fall may be too late. And I know this firsthand because I'm running against one of the cap-and-trade Republicans here in New Jersey in six months in a primary.

RUSH: I actually think that that process is underway. I think this whole tea party movement is exactly what this is about, and I know those people are fired up and they are recruiting, and I think they're going to find their recruitment efforts made easier --

CALLER: Yes.

RUSH: -- especially you know, wait 'til Obama does that State of the Union speech, wait 'til he starts patting himself on the back, wait 'til he starts lying through the teeth about how everybody's going to have increased care, increased coverage at a lower cost, praising himself, ripping the Bush administration. That State of the Union speech is going to be the equivalent of himself carving his own face on Mount Rushmore, and it's going to repulse people.

CALLER: You know, for someone like myself, who, you know, has a primary in six months against a cap and trader, you know, and the tea party movement has been involved in my race as well, we just need more ammunition to go up against these guys who are funded, you know, by special interests, unions, and those sort of things.

RUSH: Yeah, I know.

CALLER: Even Republicans.

RUSH: I know and they're going to have slush fund assistance as well. But never before in the upcoming elections will ideas matter as much as they will in November of 2010, never before. I know all of you guys running for office need money. But I can give you countless examples where candidates who were so underfunded compared to their competition, their opponent, and still won. The mayor of Indianapolis won reelection with practically no money. It can be done. The power of ideas and the power of articulating them and communicating them, rallying the American people, being positive,

upbeat, inspirational, motivational, speaking great things about the United States and our potential, and there's no reason for this country to change, there's no reason for us to ever believe that the best days in this country are behind us. It can be done. I know money is important, but money is going to be scarce. The economy is in the tank, ten percent unemployment and maybe higher. The power of ideas -- trust me on this -- the power of ideas next November will matter more than they have in a long time.

It's why I wanted to mention this Wall Street Journal editorial today, their lead editorial. This is an illustration of the disparity in how tax increases are going to apply. Eugene Steuerle of the left-leaning Urban Institute, and they are a left-leaning bunch, think tank, Eugene Steuerle points out: "The truth is that no one really knows how much Obamacare will cost because its assumptions on paper are so unrealistic. To hide the cost increases created by other parts of the bill and transfer them onto the federal balance sheet, the Senate sets up government-run 'exchanges.'" Have you heard this word being bandied about? Who the hell knows what it is, a health exchange. Well, the purpose of the health exchange is "to hide the cost increases created by other parts of the bill and transfer them onto the federal balance sheet, the Senate sets up government-run 'exchanges' that will subsidize insurance for those earning up to 400% of the poverty level, or \$96,000 for a family of four in 2016. Supposedly they would only be offered to those whose employers don't provide insurance or work for small businesses." And this is where the left-leaning Urban Institute comes on the scene.

Eugene Steuerle says that "this system would treat two workers with the same total compensation -- whatever the mix of cash wages and benefits -- very differently. Under the Senate bill, someone who earned \$42,000 would get \$5,749 from the current tax exclusion for

employer-sponsored coverage but \$12,750 in the exchange. A worker making \$60,000 would get \$8,310 in the exchanges but only \$3,758 in the current system." I know these numbers run together and it's hard to keep track of it on radio, but this is the reason that Mr. Steuerle from the Urban Institute "concludes that the Senate bill is not just a new health system but also 'a new welfare and tax system' that will warp the labor market. Given the incentives of these two-tier subsidies, employers with large numbers of lower-wage workers like Walmart may well convert them into 'contractors' or do more outsourcing," in order to have to pay less. Taxes, spending, whatever numbers are in any piece of federal legislation that get scored by the CBO, they always score them as a static, never counting for the dynamic, never accounting for how real people will react to these new laws. And that's why these guesses are just that, just wild guesses.

Sue in Boca Raton, great to have us with us on the EIB Network. Hello.

CALLER: Hey, Rush, longtime listener, first-time caller, and my son actually, who's 19, he's listening right now. But I have to tell you, I was born in Venezuela, so I know very well what's happening with Obama and this is becoming totally socialistic and for all those people in Nebraska that are calling, I was listening today, you're going to need to get out every single -- you're going to knock on doors, you're going to have to go out and get these people out of there. But I don't know, what would you suggest we do? I mean I have called this guy here. Ben Nelson is a Benedict Arnold. They're liars, they're cheaters. We have lost all integrity, character, morality, and if people don't think that one vote matters, just look what's happening. It's so frustrating because I mean you sit there and you don't even know what to do. And so I'm asking you to tell all of us, what are we supposed to do? I mean we've called, I talk to everybody I can, and, you know, you tell me, you're the master, you tell us what --

RUSH: This is very true.

CALLER: -- we're supposed to do.

RUSH: Very true.

CALLER: (laughing) What are we supposed to do? Except, people cannot be -- we tend to be very forgetful people. You know, we forgot 9/11, and I've lived all over the world and we do live in the greatest country on the planet.

RUSH: Wait, wait, wait, people are not going to forget this, because if it indeed is signed into law early on next year, then the tax increases commence immediately, and people will feel the impact of this right off the bat. I wouldn't be surprised if they delay the tax increases to 2011 as a result. But don't worry, people are not going to forget this. Here's the first thing I would suggest that you do. I don't know that you are of this mind-set, but there are a lot of people today who think that there's no difference in the two parties and that the only solution to this is a third party, particularly for a presidential candidate. Now, if you haven't noticed, I'm not speaking to you specifically yet, Sue, on this, and your question, but if you haven't noticed, folks, not one Republican in the Senate voted for this. There is a huge difference in the two parties. Do not think that the whole system has to be tossed aside because both parties are just as bad. Both parties have elements of worthlessness in them, but still structurally and philosophically there are huge differences. Really there's not a whole lot you can do. The next elections are where it all is. November 2010 is where it all is. I know you're worried people are going to forget about things by then. They're not.

CALLER: Well, we're not. I mean here we are, we're down here in South Florida, and I can tell you that there is not a person that I don't talk to, whether they were Republican or Democrat, everybody is so up in arms that I think they better pay attention. I mean I do e-mail, I do call, as a

matter of fact I don't call Washington, I call their offices even though I'm not in Nebraska or Nevada, I call them and I tell them, "I can't wait for the next election," because I'll go from Florida to Nebraska to knock on doors just to do that, and the American people need to understand what our Founding Fathers did, you know, so that we do the same thing.

RUSH: Let me tell you something. The Founding Fathers created this country. They rose up against a tyranny that is nothing compared to the tyranny in this health care bill. The Founding Fathers created in country over much less than what it is happening via health care and everything else in the Obama agenda. Now, I don't want to say this the wrong way, but I actually think you're wasting your time calling these people. I think you're wasting your time e-mailing them. (interruption) You disagree with that, Mr. Snedley? You do? They're not paying any attention to it. If it makes you feel better go ahead and do it but don't expect any reaction to it. If it makes you feel better to pepper these people with e-mails and phone calls, by all means, do it, but don't think that's going to change the way they vote. Until you can pay them \$500 million, like Harry Reid can, you're not going to change the way they vote.

The only answer to this is to defeat every liberal on every ballot in every state in every election. That has to be the objective. The lesson here is that liberalism is a lie, it is a destructive force, and it is un-American, and it has to be defeated. And liberals run as Democrats so there has to be a mobilization against the Democrat Party. There are no moderate Democrats. We're seeing that here. And that's what has to happen. The American people, in our constitutional form of government, make changes at the ballot box. You gotta get your ego out of this in terms of having these people react to you and respond to you. Even if they do, it's going to be phony just to get you off their back. We've gone way beyond that. We've gone beyond that. What we have to do

now is increase voter registration, increase voter turnout, and use the emotion that's building up here as a means of pulling that off.

BREAK TRANSCRIPT

RUSH: Ellen in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Ben Nelson's home state. It's great to have you here. Hello.

CALLER: Hello, Rush. Thank you for taking my call. Maybe you'll save my sanity. I am so upset with this whole deal. I was never involved in politics before. I never paid too much attention like most people. We just think, "Oh, they'll take care of things, do things right." Well, they don't, and I have been calling and e-mailing, and nobody listens.

RUSH: Wait a minute.

CALLER: And I am so --

RUSH: Wait, wait. Why are you all of a sudden upset and involved?

CALLER: Well, when I started seeing what's going on with our country. We are losing it. We are not going to have the country that I grew up with.

RUSH: All right! See, folks, this is the proof. You think you're all alone, you think you're the only one noticing what's going wrong. Here's a woman from Scottsbluff, Nebraska, who admitted she paid no attention to this kind of stuff. This is so egregious and outrageous that she can see that a redefinition of the country is taking place right before her eyes so that's another thing to keep in mind. You're not alone. The potential for massive growth of this opinion is there.

The Washington Political Class Does Not Care What You Think

RUSH: Waterloo, Iowa. Ann, I'm glad you waited. You're next on the EIB Network. Hello.

CALLER: Hello.

RUSH: Hi.

CALLER: Hi, Rush. Thank you for taking my call.

RUSH: You bet.

CALLER: I had a really rough couple of weeks trying to get some good night's sleep. I'm not talking about the bed, I'm just talking about looking and hearing and reading all the stuff going on, health care, all of these socialistic moves, the lying, I mean I wish people would just quit being so politically correct and start calling Obama what he is. He is a liar. And I'm calling basically because I kind of went through this thing on Internet last night, and there's to me like a lot of stuff going on where people are just so angry that it's almost, to me, I pick up something like it's going to go to a next stage of anger. And I think we all kind of know what that means. You know, when you get to a point where all the faxing that you do, like what people have been trying to do or are doing to all the senators, and I myself, I've done so many phone calls, Rush, I have the whole book on (unintelligible).org congressional dictionary, and I have for three days been trying and trying and trying to fax at least 20 to 30 of these senators, and none of the faxes went through. Some of the people I talked to tried calling, as I have, at twelve o'clock at night and all the mailboxes are full. To me it's like if you aren't going to pay attention to us and what we are really saying, to listen to us, I guess -- you know, it's like anybody else, if you don't care to listen to me, if you close your door and lock your door --

RUSH: Wait a second, let me step in here because I want to try to save you some mental energy. You're looking at this the entire wrong way. They're not listening to us. They have the polling data. You're wasting your time e-mailing them. You're wasting your time faxing them. You're wasting your time calling them. This is no longer

a representative republic. This is not a democracy. You're nothing but a gnat. You're an inconvenience, especially if you disagree with what they're doing. You're somebody to be gotten even with. You're somebody whose mind isn't right yet. You are somebody that they're going to have to erase. They don't want to have to deal with your opposition. This is why I've been saying for practically my entire broadcast career behind this microphone, the only way to understand this is to understand what liberalism is and who liberals are, radical leftists, and at that point you will understand how truly insignificant you are. They don't matter to you. They're not even thinking about what you want and don't want. They're not thinking about how they can best respond to public opinion here to prolong their careers or to do the best for the country.

This is about them. This is about power in perpetuity. This is about ruling you, not governing the country. This is not about we the people. It's about them the political class. They have sought this moment ever since FDR. They have sought total control over this country, over this population, over individuals in this country for years. They have made a mockery of the notion that they're interested in what you think or care about their public opinion. They're not. They know the risks that they're running. That's why they have these slush funds to help with their reelection efforts, to try to help whatever fraud it takes next November with ACORN or what have you. They know that nobody wants this. They know vast majorities don't want this. That alone ought to tell you what we're dealing with and who we are.

Now, the anger, I can understand it. I know you all get it, I know you all understand exactly what's happening here and I know you all understand why it's bad and why it's not healthy for the country and so forth. But the idea that this can be changed with some faxes or phone calls to this group -- they're shutting all that down. Their mailboxes aren't full, they just got them shut

down, just have a return message saying they're all full. They're not looking at the mailboxes in e-mail or snail mail. They're not listening to phone calls. It's all a sham. They want you to think they are, that they're overwhelmed and trying to pay attention, but this is all about them. Listen to what Ben Nelson says. Listen to what Mary Landrieu says. It's all about the best for my state. That means it's all about the best for my reelection. They think that the people in their states are going to vote for them because they, the people, are being bought off with a hospital or full-fledged Medicaid expansion paid for by the federal government, which is nothing more than them. The federal government's not paying for anything that they don't first tax from us or print for themselves.

RUSH: Dan in Fremont, New Hampshire, nice to have you with us, sir. Hello.

CALLER: Mega dittos, Rush, from the live free or die state. Remember, death is not the worst of evils. What I wanted to talk to you about is that what the people need to do is get behind their state governments and get the state governments to stand up to the federal government and its overreaching, this usurpation of powers. We have a bill here in New Hampshire that's going to make it a misdemeanor to interfere with the health care or health insurance of a New Hampshire citizen based upon a federal law to which our general court has not given its consent.

RUSH: Well, it's an idea, except the states are being bought off. The reason the states are not going to oppose this is that they're all being bought off. Look at Nebraska, look at Vermont, Louisiana, they're all being bought off.

CALLER: Well, New Hampshire wasn't bought off. Our Democrat senator wasn't smart enough to hold out.

RUSH: Well, yeah, okay you got a point, that's why I said earlier in the show, where are all these other states and these governors and state legislatures complaining about all the special deals these four or five other states got that they didn't get? They're probably still in the process of figuring it out. They're still in the process of figuring out what all has really happened here, not to mention what you point out, that there are so many constitutional violations, the equal-protection clause.

CALLER: Remember, too, that the Constitution only says that the Constitution laws pursuant to it and treaties are the supreme law of the land. Therefore this monster is not part of the supreme law of the land.

RUSH: Yeah, technically it's not but it is until somebody fights it and challenges it on that basis.

CALLER: Well, that's what we've got to do, we've got to rally people around their state legislators, embolden them. That's part of our job.

RUSH: It is one way to do it, I agree with you. Senator Lindsey Grahamnesty of South Carolina has asked the attorney general of that state to investigate the deals because South Carolina and Lindsey Grahamnesty were left out.

CALLER: Well, and the article of the federal Constitution that they're claiming this power under also says that all duties, excises, and taxes have to be uniform, and though this is kind of an inverse to additional payments, it still ends up being a tax issue.

RUSH: I know. That's what I meant about the equal-protection clause being violated here. So many elements, parts of the Constitution have been trashed and shredded here to make this happen. Taxation without any accompanying benefits for four years, I mean it's an abomination. It's an utter disgrace. It is not American. I don't think the Democrats

understand the boiling rage that exists throughout this country because their willing accomplices in the State-Controlled Media are not reporting it. And they are shutting off any response. They don't want to see the faxes that you're sending or the emails that you're sending. They don't want to hear the phone calls that you're making and they're living in a dream world and pretending that if you don't care, it doesn't matter, that you're just a nutcase that's been primed by talk radio, and it's not going to matter once the November elections come around because you're either going to forget about it and other things will be taking hold, unemployment is going to start going down, they think, the economic circumstance will improve, that will make everybody forget this sort of thing, tax increases are going to start immediately, but the health care benefits delayed for four years.

By the way, part of the benefits, the things that are being delayed four years -- I made this point in the first hour of the program -- you go back to the old professionals, FDR and LBJ, when they came up with Social Security, the war on poverty, Great Society, they front-loaded the benefits, back-loaded the tax increases. So you got the goodies with apparently not having to pay for it. And by that time the goodies were entrenched, and special interests had evolved all around them to protect them. This bunch is going at it the opposite way. You are paying for it first and then you get the so-called benefits four years down the road. Now, the reason they're rolling the dice on this is because there aren't any benefits. What's waiting for us four years down the road is 100% government control over our lives. If that kicked in immediately, they would not have one Democrat win reelection in 2010 other than from places like San Francisco and New York, Boston, places like that.

If they delay government control of everybody's life 'til 2014, that means that the Congress gets reelected in 2010 and 2012 -- this is how they're thinking about it -- and Obama gets reelected in

2012, and then the revolt comes and nothing can be done about it because everybody has won reelection. That's their thinking. I believe that their thinking is flawed because I think all of these tax increases, they're going to hit immediately amidst ten to 17% unemployment, with no end in sight to that, are going to be so devastating to this economy that back-pocket economic issues are going to be the overriding factor in November along with the details of this health care bill, because by the time November 2010 comes around there isn't going to be one American who doesn't understand what a total travesty this is.

AP Propaganda: Economy "Rebound" is '09 Top Story

RUSH: Now, I don't have a Nobel Prize or anything, my friends, but I don't need one to know this. To prove my most recently-made point that the Drive-By's have sacrificed their integrity and checked it at the door to become repeaters and propagandists, I am holding here in my formerly nicotine-stained fingers the latest dispatch from the State-Controlled Associated Press. The story is about the top ten business stories of 2009, and do you know what the leading story is, the #1 top business story is? The "rebound" of the US economy. "In 2009, the economy was near collapse before pulling back from the brink of depression. Unemployment topped 10 percent, but layoffs eased. General Motors and Chrysler toppled into bankruptcy and emerged smaller and leaner.

"The Dow Jones industrial average swooned to a 12-year low, then came part of the way back. It was a year of payback for having lived beyond our means -- from Wall Street bankers who devoured risk they couldn't manage to ordinary Americans living in homes they couldn't afford with mortgages they didn't understand. It was a year of finger-pointing over blame for the worst recession since the Great Depression. Americans

pondered how long it would take to mend shattered nest eggs, livelihoods, government balance sheets and economic confidence. It was a year that gave birth to buzzwords -- 'new frugality,' 'new normal' and 'green shoots' -- that captured the fragility of America's recovery." Are you ready to throw up yet? "The economy's wild ride was voted the top business story of the year by U.S. newspaper editors surveyed by The Associated Press. The collapse of the U.S. auto industry came in second, followed by skyrocketing home foreclosures."

However, when they get to the list of the top ten business stories of this year, they label number one: "Economy's Fall -- and Rebound." Now, that's pure propaganda. There's no factual reporting. What rebound? I'll tell you, if Bush were president during all this and the only thing that was rebounding were the stock market, which is what's happening here, they would be pillorying that as nothing more than Bush making sure the rich did not suffer during the downturn at the expense of average Americans. But right now to have to sit here and listen to all this gunk about how Wall Street coming back means that there is an economic rebound going on.

The reason Wall Street's coming back (to the extent that it is) is it's the only place to put any money right now, that and gold. The US economy is not suitable for investment right now, and there is no investment in the private sector. All the GDP growth that's occurred in the third quarter of this year occurred on the government side. Anyway, they go through the list. "Economy's Fall -- and Rebound" is number one. "The Auto Industry Collapse," number two. "Foreclosure" is number three. "Wall Street Claws Back," number four. "Small to Mid-Sized Banks Fail," number five. "US Spills Red Ink," number six. Amongst all of these disastrous headlines they dare say there's a rebound going on here! "Madoff Scandal," number seven. "Federal Aid for the Economy," number eight. "A new frugality," number nine. This is the section

where they say we have learned to live within our means. We have learned to discover what our families are really like! We're sharing more. We're spending more time with family. Even extracurricular activities at school have been shut down which is good for kiddies to be home with their parents, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. All of this crap and they're trying to make mincemeat out of it.

Number nine, "Financial Reform Stalls -- An Obama administration plan to overhaul regulation of financial industry slows over industry opposition and renewed signs of a stabilized financial system. The House approves a plan in December that would grant the government new powers to split up companies that threaten the economy, create an agency to oversee consumer banking transactions and shine a light into shadow financial markets that have escaped federal oversight. But the legislation faces an uncertain future in the Senate." Not for long. This is companion legislation to the health care debacle that has passed, which will give them total control over practically everything.

So, top ten business stories. Number one is "Economy's Fall -- and Rebound," and the other nine are all about the economy's fall and how horrible it has been, how tragic it has been, and how wonderful has been in trying to reverse it.

The AP story which names our economic recovery as the top story of the year:

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/34501908/ns/business-us_business/

Additional Rush Links

Chris Dodd gets \$100 million for a health care center from the Senate healthcare bill:

<http://www.courant.com/news/politics/hc-dodd-health-care.artdec21,0,2847177.story>

Nelson's deal for Nebraska:

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/12/20/nelson-accused-selling-vote-health-nebraska-pay/>

Of all places, the UK Guardian tells us the truth about America's economy under Obama's helm:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/dec/20/us-unemployment-rate-rise-continues>



MTV and Rock the Vote push Healthcare legislation and recommend withholding sex from those who do not agree with you. Since this video is all about withholding sex, it never mentions that all of these young people in this video, along with all their counterparts in real America, will be forced to buy healthcare insurance. All young people will have healthcare insurance because the government will mandate that they buy healthcare insurance. So, withhold sex for the privilege of being required by law to buy healthcare insurance—brilliant idea.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNfG8gwa mKM>

One more thing: Rock The Vote is a tax exempt 501c3 non-partisan 'charity.' We pay for this advertisement with our tax dollars. These rich, spoiled actor kids in the video? We paid for them. The script? We paid for that. The director, the lighting, the sound mixing and all that is related to this short vid? We paid for that.

Media Research Center

<http://mrc.org/>

Sweetness and Light:

<http://sweetness-light.com>

Dee Dee's political blog:

<http://somosrepublicans.com/author/deedee/>

Citizens Against Government Waste:

<http://www.cagw.org/>

CNS News:

<http://www.cnsnews.com/home>

Climate change news:

<http://www.climatedepot.com/>

Conservative website featuring stories of the day:

<http://www.lonelyconservative.com/>

<http://www.sodahead.com/>

Global Warming:

<http://www.climatedepot.com/>

Michael Crichton on global warming as a religion:

<http://www.michaelcrichton.net/speech-environmentalism-as-religion.html>

Here is an interesting military site:

<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/>

This is the link which caught my eye from there:



Perma-Links

Since there are some links you may want to go back to from time-to-time, I am going to begin a list of them here. This will be a list to which I will add links each week.

Republican healthcare plan:

<http://www.gop.gov/solutions/healthcare>

<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?t=169400>

Christian Blog:

<http://wisdomknowledge.wordpress.com/>

Muslim Demographics (this is outstanding):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3X5hIFXYU>

News feed/blog:

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/>

Conservative blog:

<http://wyblog.us/blog/>

Richard O'Leary's websites:

www.letfreedomwork.com

www.freedomtaskforce.com

<http://www.eccentrix.com/members/beacon/>

News site:

<http://lucianne.com/>

Note sure yet about this one:

<http://looneyleft.com/>

News busted all shows:

<http://www.eyeblast.tv/public/search.aspx?q=newsbusted&t=videos>

Conservative news and opinion:

<http://bijenkorf.wordpress.com/>

Not Evil, Just Wrong website:

<http://noteviljustwrong.com/>

Global Warming Site:

<http://www.climatedepot.com/>

Important Muslim videos and sites:

Muslim demographics:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaZT73MrYvM>

Muslim deception:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNZQ5D8lwfl>

Conservative versus liberal viewpoints:

<http://www.studentnewsdaily.com/other/conservative-vs-liberal-beliefs/>

This is indispensable: the Wall Street Journal's guide to Obama-care (all of their pertinent articles arranged by date—send one a day to your liberal friends):

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704471504574441193211542788.html>

Excellent list of Blogs on the bottom, right-hand side of this page:

<http://gatewaypundit.firstthings.com/>

Not Evil, Just Wrong video on Global Warming

<http://noteviljustwrong.com/>

<http://www.letfreedomwork.com/>

<http://www.taskforcefreedom.com/council.htm>

This has fantastic videos:

www.reason.tv

Global Warming Hoax:

<http://www.globalwarminghoax.com/news.php>

A debt clock and a lot of articles on the debt:

<http://defeatthedebt.com/>

The Best Graph page (for those of us who love graphs):

<http://midnightgraphs.blogspot.com/>

The Architecture of Political Power (an online book):

<http://www.mega.nu/ampp/>

Recommended foreign news site:

<http://www.globalpost.com/>

News site:

<http://newsbusters.org/> (always a daily video here)

This website reveals a lot of information about politicians and their relationship to money. You can find out, among other things, how many earmarks that Harry Reid has been responsible for in any given year; or how much an individual Congressman's wealth has increased or decreased since taking office.

<http://www.opensecrets.org/index.php>

<http://www.fedupusa.org/>

The news sites and the alternative news media:

<http://drudgereport.com/>

<http://newsbusters.org/>

<http://drudgereport.com/>

<http://www.hallindsey.com/>

<http://newsbusters.org/>

<http://reason.com/>

Andrew Breithbart's new website:

<http://biggovernment.breitbart.com/>

Kevin Jackson's [conservative black] website:

<http://theblacksphere.net/>

Notes from the front lines (in Iraq):

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/>

Remembering 9/11:

<http://www.realamericanstories.com/>

Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball site:

<http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/>

Conservative Blogger:

<http://romanticpoet.wordpress.com/>

Economist and talk show host Walter E. Williams:

<http://economics.gmu.edu/wew/>

The current Obama czar roster:

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0909/26779.html>

45 Goals of Communists in order to take over the United States (circa 1963):

<http://www.rense.com/general32/america.htm>

How this correlates to the goals of the ACLU:

<http://dianedew.com/aclu.htm>

ACLU founders:

<http://www.angelfire.com/mi4/stokjok/Founders.html>

Conservative Websites:

<http://www.theodoresworld.net/>

<http://conservalinked.com/>

<http://www.moonbattery.com/>

<http://www.rockiesghostriders.com/>

<http://sweetness-light.com/>

www.coalitionoftheswilling.net

<http://shortforordinary.com/>

Flopping Aces:

<http://www.floppingaces.net/>

The Romantic Poet's Webblog:

<http://romanticpoet.wordpress.com/>

Blue Dog Democrats:

<http://www.house.gov/melancon/BlueDogs/Member%20Page.html>

This looks to be a good source of information on the health care bill (s):

<http://joinpatientsfirst.com/>

Undercover video and audio for planned parenthood:

<http://liveaction.org/>

The Complete Czar list (which I think is updated as needed):

<http://theshowlive.info/?p=572>

This is an outstanding website which tells the truth about Obama-care and about what the mainstream media is hiding from you:

<http://www.obamacaretruth.org/>

Great business and political news:

www.wsj.com

www.businessinsider.com

Politico.com is a fairly neutral site (or, at the very worst, just a little left of center). They have very good informative videos at:

<http://www.politico.com/multimedia/>

Great commentary:

www.Atlasshrugs.com

My own website:

www.kukis.org

Congressional voting records:

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/>

On Obama (if you have not visited this site, you need to check it out). He is selling a DVD on this site as well called *Media Malpractice*; I have not viewed it yet, except pieces which I have seen played on tv and on the internet. It looks pretty good to me.

<http://howobamagotelected.com/>

Global Warming sites:

<http://ilovecarbondioxide.com/>

35 inconvenient truths about Al Gore's film:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5J7JNfLYco>

<http://www.noteviljustwrong.com/trailer>

<http://www.defendyourhealthcare.us/home.html>

Islam:

www.thereligionofpeace.com

Even though this group leans left, if you need to know what happened each day, and you are a busy person, here is where you can find the day's news given in 100 seconds:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/tpmtv>

This guy posts some excellent vids:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/PaulWilliamsWorld>

HipHop Republicans:

<http://www.hiphoprepublican.blogspot.com/>

And simply because I like cute, intelligent babes:

<http://alisonrosen.com/>

The Latina Freedom Fighter:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/LatinaFreedomFighter>

The psychology of homosexuality:

<http://www.narth.com/>

Liberty Counsel, which stands up against the A.C.L.U.

www.lc.org

Health Care:

<http://fixhealthcarepolicy.com/>

Betsy McCaughey's Health Care Site:

