

Written by Jeff Davis

Wednesday, 11 July 2012 14:04 - Last Updated Wednesday, 11 July 2012 14:13

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□□ *The recent Supreme Court decision upholding the basic tenets of the Affordable Health Care Act (commonly known as Obamacare) was a welcome relief to anyone who advocates for the approximately thirty million Americans currently lacking health insurance.*

□ *As expected, the vote was 5-4, and one of the biggest surprises was who provided the swing vote on the Court. Ever since college days, I have had an ongoing interest in following the decisions of the Supreme Court, and I would never have guessed that Chief Justice Roberts would side with the liberal wing of the Court.*

*Leave it for another day to decipher the long-term ramifications of the judicial reasoning behind the constitutionality of the Health Care Act, as I would bet that very few people are interested in the implications that come from the Justices rejecting the Constitution's so-called Commerce Clause and instead, relying on the authority of Congress to enact taxes. Call it a mandate, call it a tax; the bottom line is the same. there will be major changes in the health-care system of our country.*

*I find it extremely bothersome, however, as to the complete hypocrisy and intransigence on the part of the Republican Party and their Teabaggers in trying to prevent enactment of the legislation. I imagine that the vast majority of the Republican Party electorate are unaware of how long their politicians have supported revamping health care with (Oh my God, can it really be true?) an individual mandate. At a time when then-President Clinton was advocating a single-payer system, the opposition was clamoring for the exact same thing that they are now so rabidly against.*

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*Starting with the elder President Bush, continuing with the likes of the conservative Heritage Foundation, half of the Republican Senate in the 1990's, Newt Gingrich in 2005, 2007, and again in 2009, and culminating with Mitt Romney when he was Governor of Massachusetts in 2006; each and every one of them has been solidly in favor of the principle of an individual mandate. Those who didn't have medical insurance would be required to purchase it and to pay a penalty for not doing so. It is rather amazing to note some of the people who have in the past supported the individual mandate: Orrin Hatch, Trent Lott, Strom Thurmond, John Danforth, Jesse Helms, Thad Cochran. An impermeable wall of conservatism, to say the least.*

*Repeatedly, for many, many years, there was nothing wrong to be found with this concept in the minds of conservative Republican stalwarts. (Conservative Republican? Now that's a redundancy if I ever saw one.) Nothing wrong, that is, until it was proposed by President Obama. At that point it became the same attitude that the Republican Party has embraced since Obama's election in 2008: oppose anything and everything that originates with the President. No compromise with Obama has become the iron-clad rule of the Republican Party. Their only goal is to get rid of the man who they consider evil incarnate. A President who is spited, hated, and denigrated for being a Muslim, a non-citizen, a socialist creeping towards communism, and worst of all, a black man. Any support of President Obama's agenda, no matter what, is unanimously opposed. (Ignorance knows no bounds when you consider that fully 25% of the Republican Party faithful still think that the President does not have a valid U.S. birth certificate and is a closet Muslim.*

*So now that the law has been upheld, what is the response of the opposition party? More political grandstanding of the same, it appears. Tomorrow will be the 33<sup>rd</sup> time that Republicans try to pass legislation to repeal the Health Care Act, knowing full well that it is going nowhere with a Democratic-controlled Senate and a guarantee of a Presidential veto. Heaven forbid that there may be more pressing issues facing our country and Congress, like an economy stuck in low gear, persistent high unemployment, and trillions of dollars in national debt. This is an election year, and pandering to your Party's base is what counts.*

*There is no alternative health care plan put forth by the Republicans, and what do you expect? For the past several decades their proposals have been essentially the same as what is found in the newly upheld law. They offer nothing on how to fix the broken system that we currently have, other than to repeal Obamacare.*

*Reading between the lines, however, it is apparent that by default the Republicans actually do have a plan for those without health insurance. Go to Hell.*

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*I wonder why the Republicans don't just go all out and also propose eliminating the federal law that requires emergency rooms to screen any and all patients who present needing medical care. If you don't have insurance, too bad; so sad. As has been stated by one of the Republican teabagger's darlings and rousingly endorsed with cheers by his audience. "Let 'em die."*

*The argument that has become the simple-minded mantra of the Republican Party is that our government is already too intrusive in our lives and has no business inserting itself in our nation's health care crisis. Never mind that health care costs are rising much faster than inflation, that at least 25% of our national expenditures are related to health care, and that these costs are not remotely sustainable. Never mind that in Massachusetts, where there has been a similar health-care mandate, ninety-four percent of the populous is covered, and yet the percentage rise in costs has decreased.*

*Essentially the entire Republican Party is Christian, and yet it boggles the mind to understand such a sanctimonious mentality that allows the richest country on earth to not provide continuity of medical care to all of its citizens. The crux of this issue truly boils down to a discrimination against those who are low income and cannot afford the outrageous premiums of health insurance.*

*Our country is willing to help the elderly (Medicare, plus a generous prescription plan), the very poor (Medicaid), and children (Children's Health Insurance Plan). We provide tax loopholes that allow pre-tax dollars to be used for purchasing health insurance and having health savings accounts to cover medical bills, both of which cost the government many billions of dollars a year in lost revenue and which are available only to the relatively well-off.*

*And the truth is that by having so many millions without insurance amounts to a transfer of payments. The indigent still get care, albeit through the emergency room and charity hospital admissions, while those costs are simply passed on to those who have insurance, by way of higher premiums and higher medical charges. You could envision this result as actually being a tax on those who do have insurance. I suppose the Republicans aren't bothered by this, as long as it's not called, heaven-forbid, a tax. But it is most assuredly a tax by-any-other name.*

*I cannot for the life of me fathom the ethics that would leave so many millions of our citizens to*

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*fend for themselves when faced with a lack of preventive care (such care has clearly been shown to save money in the long haul) or the means of receiving treatment and follow-up for acute conditions. If that is the mentality of our reverential Christian country, shame on those who would be so cold-hearted and cruel.*

*So why don't we all become Republicans and buckle down, showing a tough-love attitude with the less fortunate amongst us:*

*You want to buy health insurance and have a pre-existing condition? Your diabetes or hearth disease, or COPD won't be covered, according to the whims of your carrier. Suffer, buddy.*

*Your cap for life-time benefits for a chronic disease has run out? Suffer buddy; no more health care for you.*

*Your children under the age of 26 have a catastrophic illness? They can't be on your policy. Pay out of your pocket, and suffer, buddy.*

*The world's economies are in turmoil; a second recession looms on the horizon, and a pink-slip (and loss of insurance coverage) hangs over your head due to economic circumstances beyond your control? Suffer buddy. When the axe falls, you're on your own.*

*These things may be disaster to those in need, but they are joyful music to the ears of the Teabaggers and Republican Party. Only three things really matter to them: less government, less taxes for the rich, and get rid of Obama.*

*Oh, it's so great to be a Christian.*

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