

NPR's Rovner: Dependent Constituencies Among the 'Benefits' of ObamaCare

By [Matthew Balan](#) | March 23, 2011 | 19:47



NPR's Julie Rovner put the best liberal spin on the one-year anniversary of ObamaCare becoming law on Wednesday's Morning Edition. When an opponent of the legislation stated that supporters would try to "create constituencies that will fight to preserve it...[by] spending hundreds of billions of dollars on health insurance subsidies," Rover added that "those are just a few of the law's benefits."

The correspondent led [her report](#) with sound bites from House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who marveled over the "landmark law," and Senator Orrin Hatch, who labeled it "one of the worst pieces of legislation in the history of this country." She continued by focusing on the opponents of ObamaCare:

ROVNER: In fact, **sowing seeds of doubt about the law is all part of opponents' strategy**, says Michael Cannon, head of health policy for the libertarian Cato Institute. That's because, at the moment, with Democrats still in control of the Senate and presidency, opponents know they can't actually do much to change the law.

MICHAEL CANNON, CATO INSTITUTE: So, if you want a legislative fix to ObamaCare, if you want to repeal it, you have to keep it unpopular between now and January of 2013.

ROVNER: That's the soonest Republicans could gain enough control to make the law go away. So what needs to happen between now and then?

CANNON: You try to keep the law from taking root, and you try to educate the public about all its harmful effects.

ROVNER: That's why all the defunding and repeal votes in Congress, not to mention the dozens of lawsuits challenging the law's constitutionality.

Instead of noting that the majority of Americans are still opposed to ObamaCare, even a year after its passage, Rovner set up her spin about the law:

ROVNER: Of course, if you're supporting the law, what you want is to sink those roots in so deep as to make the law, well, unrepeatable. Cannon knows a little something about that too.

CANNON: You want to create constituencies that will fight to preserve it, and by sending \$250 checks to seniors, you may be creating constituencies; by giving tax credits and subsidies to employers, you may be creating constituencies; and, certainly, when the law begins spending hundreds of billions of dollars on health insurance subsidies to low and middle income Americans, you're going to be creating a huge constituency.

ROVNER: And those are just a few of the law's benefits: things like starting to fill in the Medicare prescription drug donut hole for seniors.

The NPR reporter then turned to one of the supporters of the legislation, Ron Pollack of the liberal organization Families USA. Unlike Cannon, who was identified as a libertarian, Rovner didn't give Pollack an ideological label:

ROVNER: Ron Pollack of Families USA, who does support the law, says that as the public sees more of the law's benefits, support for it will grow. But he says it's about more than just buying off individual constituencies. It's about what the law actually does for people.

RON POLLACK, FAMILIES USA: Those people who've got preexisting conditions, they don't want to be denied coverage by insurance companies. Those people who've got health conditions, they don't want to be charged an arm and a leg in discriminatory premiums. When people get sick, they don't want to lose the health coverage they've been paying for for many years.

ROVNER: Pollack also says supporters of the law are still fighting to help the public understand the 2,000-page-plus measure.

POLLACK: There are so many myths about this legislation, from death panels, government takeover, that this is adding to the deficit. None of those things are true.

Pollack's denial that ObamaCare doesn't add to deficit doesn't square with an [August 19, 2010 report](#) by Ben Smith of Politico which points out that his own organization was among the "White House allies [that] are dramatically shifting their attempts to defend health care legislation, **abandoning claims that it will reduce costs and the deficit** and instead stressing a promise to 'improve it.'" The bipartisan deficit commission final report [actually pointed out](#) that these earlier claims about "count on large phantom savings."

Unsurprisingly, the NPR correspondent didn't fact-check any of the "supporter's" claims.

Rovner gave one last hint of her views on the year-old law at the end of her report: "...On the law's first birthday, it's still one big race, a competition between supporters who hope the health law will have many more birthdays to celebrate, and **opponents, who'd like to blow out the candles permanently.**"

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