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Political thuggery and ObamaCare

Tue, 09/14/2010 - 1:17pm | posted by Jason Pye

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Yesterday, I noted that the Obama Administration is threatening insurers that are [considering rate increases to pay for mandates and regulations](#) brought on by ObamaCare. The *Wall Street Journal* is calling these threats “political thuggery”:

Witness Kathleen Sebelius's Thursday letter to America's Health Insurance Plans, the industry trade group—a thuggish message even by her standards. The Health and Human Services secretary wrote that some insurers have been attributing part of their 2011 premium increases to ObamaCare and warned that “there will be zero tolerance for this type of misinformation and unjustified rate increases.”

Zero tolerance for expressing an opinion, or offering an explanation to policyholders? They're more subtle than this in Caracas.

What Ms. Sebelius really means is that the government will prohibit insurers from doing business if reality is not politically convenient for Democrats. ObamaCare includes a slew of mandated benefits for next year, such as allowing children to remain on their parents' plans until age 26 and “free” preventative care (i.e., no direct out-of-pocket cost sharing for consumers). The tone of Ms. Sebelius's letter suggests that she doesn't understand that money is exchanged for goods and services, and that if Congress mandates new benefits, premiums will rise.

Over at [Cato @ Liberty](#), Michael Cannon has a [round-up of reaction to this story](#), what he correctly calls a “threat to free speech.” They don't like being called on their lies and half-truths. You have to wonder if the Associated Press is going to lose its seat in White House press conferences now that they [put out a fact check](#) destroying “cost savings” claims.

Democrats and the Obama Administration are even having a tough time selling ObamaCare to Jon Stewart, who has had a recent streak of criticizing Democrats on civil liberties and lack of transparency, as you can see in this exchange with DNC Chair Tim Kaine (2:00 to 3:15):



In case you don't want to listen to the video, here is what Stewart told Kaine:

Can you understand how people, even though health care reform has passed, don't quite understand what it's done for them? What they're hearing now is premiums are going to be increased even though they were told that it wasn't, people are still going to get dropped from coverage even though they were told that it wasn't. You know, I follow this stuff pretty closely, and I listen to the president pretty closely, I still don't know what he wants out of health care reform.

Kaine gave a list of a few things in ObamaCare, such as college students being able to stay on their parents' insurance policy until their 26, the [vote buying scheme for seniors](#) and forcing insurance companies to give coverage to individuals pre-existing conditions.

Stewart then noted that Democrats have tried to delineate from their base, pointing to the [comments about the "professional left"](#) by White House spokesman Robert Gibbs. Kaine stopped Stewart, saying, "He had a bad day, he had a bad day, have you ever had a bad day? I mean, I've had a bad day, he had a bad day. You've never had a bad day?" Stewart replied, "Not one like you're going to have in November."

Exactly.

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