

The Washington Post

Trump only hires “the best people” — except when it comes to his health care policy advisors

Jonathan H. Adler

March 7, 2016

Last week, Republican frontrunner Donald Trump released his health care reform plan, “Healthcare Reform to Make America Great Again.” Those who actually understand health care policy, across the political spectrum, were not impressed. By that I do not mean they disagreed with his proposals. Rather, I mean that they don’t think it even constitutes a “plan” (or even what passes for a “plan” in the midst of a campaign). For instance, liberal-leaning Adrianna McIntyre tweeted: “Not a single health policy expert was locked in a room to generate this ‘plan.’” Others commented that to suggest it was pulled together by an unpaid campaign intern would be an insult to the capabilities of unpaid interns.

At the other end of the political spectrum, the Cato Institute’s Michael Cannon was even less impressed, calling the plan “a series of ignorant, incoherent, and self-contradictory verbal spasms.” As Cannon notes, some of what Trump proposes merely restates existing law, while other reforms either don’t accomplish what Trump claims or contradict his stated positions (a point Avik Roy also makes here). Cannon concludes:

This isn’t a health reform plan. It’s a campaign operative copying and pasting a bunch of stuff from the around the web, without knowing what it means or even realizing that he’s describing current law. It shows Trump is as unserious about reforming health care as ever. He doesn’t have a plan. He has paroxysms.

To be clear, the critique is not of Trump’s specific policies, and whether they are better or worse than the status quo or the various reform plans put forward by other candidates. These are questions upon which reasonable people can and will disagree. Rather, Trump’s proposal suggests he does not really have any policy at all, or at least not one that he (or anyone on his campaign) actually understands. It is as if a campaign advisor decided that Trump had to say *something* about health care policy, beyond complaining about “lines around states,” but did not care one whit about the coherence of what was said. Indeed, it’s almost as if the plan was written by the same folks that sent cease-and-desist letters to the wrong organization. Top men, indeed.