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Health Reform Comic Book

By [DAVID LEONHARDT](#)

[From The Boston Herald:](#)

The MIT economics whiz who crafted President Obama's national health care overhaul now plans to explain the complex and controversial plan to the masses — in one long comic book.

Jonathan Gruber, a nationally recognized health economist who devised the economic underpinnings of Obamacare (Gruber hates the term), said his three comic-loving kids encouraged him to use the hip format of the graphic novel — basically an expensive comic published in book form — to tell the story of the complicated plan to 300 million Americans.

I'm sure [Mr. Gruber](#) would agree that the first sentence was an exaggeration. He was one of the people who helped shape the ideas that ultimately led to last year's health law, but it's a bit much to say he devised its economic underpinnings.

A better descriptions comes later in the article, when he is called "a key architect of Romneycare." Mr. Gruber was intimately involved in the crafting of the universal health care plan in Massachusetts, as an outside adviser to Gov. Mitt Romney. The plan Mr. Obama signed was modeled on the Massachusetts plan.

Either way, the comic book seems like a good idea, so long as it's well executed. More from The Herald:

Unlike most comic books, Gruber's won't have a superhero like Batman or Captain America or a villain like the Joker, he said.

"I'm going to use the facts to tell the story," Gruber, 45, told the Pulse yesterday. "I'm the narrator guiding the reader through the law. It'll have lots of pictures and text."...

The graphic novel is an increasingly popular way to tell complex stories, according to Gruber's editor Thomas LeBien, who has used the format to explain the U.S. Constitution and Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks....

But when LeBien first approached Gruber last summer, the busy professor almost turned him down flat.

“I just wasn’t sure if this would be useful enough,” Gruber recalled. “Then my wife and kids said, ‘You’re crazy. You’ve got to do this.’ So I decided to give it a shot.”

Even one of the national health plan’s fiercest critics, Michael F. Cannon of the free market Cato Institute in Washington tipped his hat to Gruber’s comic book.

“I’ve got to hand it to him,” said Cannon, the think tank’s director of health policy studies. “It’s a brilliant idea.”

Gruber said he will illustrate how the president’s plan will lower health care costs and end discriminatory insurance practices that make it much harder for sick people to get coverage.

“My family made me realize that there’s such a misunderstanding of the bill and that it’s important to explain why we need this, and what it does,” he said. “I’ve found that when people understand it, they like it.”