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## RomneyCare vs. ObamaCare: Does Page Count Matter?

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Marathon presidential contests mean that silly seasons in politics start early. Look no further than Mitt Romney's flailing efforts to find some contrast -- *any* contrast -- with President Obama over government-controlled health care as proof.

Glenn Kessler, who writes a feature for the Washington Post called "The Fact Checker," [examines](#) Romney's contention that his Massachusetts health care reform abomination isn't quite as abominable as President Obama's national version. The reason, page count.

Romney argues that ObamaCare, which stretches to a mind-numbing 2,700 pages of legislation, contains far more health care mischief than the legislation he pushed in the Bay State. RomneyCare was concocted in a mere seventy pages, or so claims the Governor.

But Kessler writes that ObamaCare legislation contained a lot of extraneous elements; stuff that Democrats threw in to piggyback on the bigger health care reform measure. The actual page count for ObamaCare is considerably less than multiple NYC metro phone books size.

Kessler went to the Cato Institute's Michael Cannon to further check facts.

Michael Cannon, director of health policy at the Cato Institute, gave us a copy of [a consolidated version of the two bills](#). In other words, this is what the law would have looked like if it had been written in the usual way. This version clocks in at just 907 pages.

Cannon is a critic of both laws and thinks that page length of a bill can be a telling indicator, showing a "potential for mischief." But he estimated that the section of the national law that directly compares to Romney's law is only about 200 pages of the 907-page version.

Then this from Kessler:

Okay, 200 pages is still more than 70, right? Not necessarily. When Romney signed the bill, [the Boston Globe reported](#) that it was 145 pages long. There's not much difference between 200 and 145 pages.

Perhaps Romney is now using double-sided paper?

The larger point is that bad things can come in small or big packages. Romney's state health care reform legislation has created a world of trouble in Massachusetts. It set a precedent in health care that opened the door to further meddling and chicanery by Massachusetts pols who are intent to "fix" RomneyCare. In politics, fixing programs typically means more red tape, higher costs to taxpayers, and even worse performance. Poorly performing programs are rarely deep-sixed.

Governor Romney, in his never-ending [quest](#) to find an angle to rationalize the RomneyCare fiasco, and to gain some contrast with Mr. Obama's government-run fiasco-in-the-making, is showing that he has two left feet politically. The Governor would be wise to cut his losses by admitting that no matter how well intended, RomneyCare isn't working, and that he'd repeal it if he could, and seeing how the Massachusetts experiment in government-run health care has come a cropper, he's adamant about repealing Obamacare before it does any real damage to the nation.

Every day Governor Romney spins and obfuscates about RomneyCare is another day that he digs a deeper hole for himself politically. The Governor is leading the GOP presidential field in polls in the early going because of his name ID and voters being inattentive to campaign politics right now. That will change when January approaches, and that's when Romney will move from frontrunner to also-ran if he hasn't shot straight on his Massachusetts health care reform goof.

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