



## **Four conservative healthcare analysts on why Trumpcare stinks so bad**

Joan McCarter

April 14, 2017

Let's start your holiday weekend off with some fun. And what could be more fun than laughing at conservative health care experts trying to make excuses for why Republicans have totally failed at crafting a decent replacement for Obamacare? From the laughable to the delusional, here we go. Starting with my favoritest of all.

### **Republicans just didn't give themselves enough time**

A decade ago, the Democrats also had conflicting health-care ideas, squabbling over single-payer and a public option, but they worked it out in legislation, says Dan Holler, the vice president of communications for Heritage Action for America. "That's not something that was capable of happening in 17 days" for Republicans, he said. The rush to pass the AHCA "was a misread of where the [Republican] conference was."

All together now: SEVEN YEARS!!!! They had SEVEN YEARS!!!! But, says American Enterprise Institute guy James Capretta, they just "didn't give themselves enough time to ... develop [Paul Ryan's plan] 'Better Way' into a more politically viable replacement plan." SEVEN YEARS.

### **It wasn't clear what the goal was**

"Repeal and replace" seemingly meant different things to different Republicans. Moderates wanted to protect the law's more popular provisions while tweaking its subsidy structure. The House Freedom Caucus thought Obamacare should be uprooted entirely. It's hard to write a bill that simultaneously bolsters and destroys a federal program.

That one is so transparently pathetic they each should have been embarrassed to even mention it. There is not one single serious person in the whole of the Republican party—either in the Congress or in the vaunted think tanks, and this proves it. They had one goal and one goal only: opposing and trying to defeat President Obama. That's where their thinking on healthcare reform started and stopped.

## **There are only so many ways to do health-care reform**

“Every time I put Obamacare in my search engine, someone has a snarky headline: ‘Republicans are starting to like Obamacare,’” said Bob Laszewski, an insurance-industry analyst. “The original outline was *their* idea!”

So this one is actually true, and not at all news. If you want to maximize access to health insurance, but still keep it in the so-called free market with a minimum of government intrusion, Obamacare—née Romneycare—is how you do it. And back to the above—had there been any truly serious work on the right, that would have been acknowledged. Which leads us to the final, actual truth.

## **Republicans just aren’t into health-care policy**

Most politicians’ knowledge of the issues is “miles wide but less than an inch deep,” says Michael Cannon, the director of health policy studies at the Cato Institute. When it comes to many Republican policymakers and health care, though, that depth might be closer to a centimeter.

Republican interest in healthcare policy extends only as far as it relates to taxes, and specifically lower taxes for the rich. Trumpcare is not a health care bill, it's a tax-cuts-for-the-wealthy bill, and a means of giving Republicans a little more leeway for even larger tax cuts.

What have we learned? Republicans have never had a clue what to do to replace Obamacare and never cared to. Because they never thought they would be in a position of having to replace it. It was a handy thing to bash Democrats and rile up the base with, but they didn't actually mean to end up being in a position to have to do something. More than 60 votes to repeal the law in part or in whole, and not a single one on an replacement bill is all the proof you need of that.