



The Note

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## Stand By Your Plan: GOP Sticks With Paul Ryan -- For Now (The Note)

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By **MICHAEL FALCONE** and **AMY WALTER**

Less than 24-hours after a painful Republican defeat in the New York special Congressional election, Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., had some advice for his fellow Republicans.

"This is not the time to go wobbly," Ryan said in an interview with ABC's Jonathan Karl. "They're going to run these attack ads at us regardless. This is time for leaders to be leaders."

And yesterday almost all Republican senators voted in favor of Ryan's controversial plan to overhaul the Medicare system. It was an attempt by Senate Democrats to get their GOP counterparts on the record, even though the proposal ultimately went down in defeat by a vote of 57 to 40.

Every Democrat voted 'no' and there were five GOP dissenters -- Scott Brown of Massachusetts, Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine, Rand Paul of Kentucky, and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska.

But, as Politico's David Rogers points out, "In a tell-tale sign of trouble ahead, there were significantly more defections among GOP moderates than in a similar partisan show vote in March on an earlier House Republican budget initiative."

And ABC's Matthew Jaffe notes, "It is unclear how much of an impact yesterday's Senate vote on the Ryan budget will have in 2012. ... The GOP has one distinct advantage heading into next year's elections -- they only have to defend 10 Senate seats compared to 23 for Democrats."

<http://abcn.ws/iEUruZ>

When asked by ABC's Karl whether he thought their support of his proposal would cost Republicans control of the House, Ryan said he did not.

"I think we were elected in this last election to take a stand on fixing this country's fiscal problems," he said, "to go after spending, to solve this debt crisis, to stop spending money we don't have."

But House Republicans are now acknowledging they need to re-tool their message if not their policy.

"If we'll just stay with our argument and do a better job developing it, we'll be fine," Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., told the Hill's Russell Berman and Molly K. Hooper. Rep. Allen West, R-Fla., echoed

Cole's point: "I think we need to be stronger in marketing who we are and our message, and not just Medicare but in every aspect -- with the jobs situation, with the economy, with national security. That's what we need to do." <http://bit.ly/jzmqCQ>

Democrats have a challenge too. Our ABC cameras captured a candid moment between former President Bill Clinton and Rep. Ryan yesterday. Clinton said he hoped that after Democrat Kathy Hochul's win in the New York special election, "Democrats don't use this as an excuse to do nothing." <http://abcn.ws/iktu9i>

One smart Democratic strategist we talked to yesterday doubted that the Ryan vote will have the same political resonance a year from now. Moreover, the coming debt ceiling vote is going to test Democrats' ability to keep the focus solely on Ryan.

Nevertheless, the Ryan plan remains a dangerous political hot potato for the 2012 presidential candidates.

We saw Newt Gingrich's dissembling on the proposal last week. At appearance at the libertarian-leaning Cato Institute in Washington, DC yesterday presidential candidate Tim Pawlenty chose his words more carefully.

"Our proposal is going to have similarities overall to the Ryan roadmap," the former Minnesota governor said, "but our Medicare plan will be somewhat different and you'll see those differences when we unveil it." <http://abcn.ws/iwQoBJ>

**PAUL RYAN DOUBLES DOWN:** "In the wake of Tuesday's stunning Republican defeat in New York special Congressional election, the Republican House Budget Chairman says he is determined to fight for his Medicare plan even if it ruins his political career. 'I don't care about that,' Ryan said in an interview on the Subway Series with ABC's Jonathan Karl. 'Now is not that time to be worried about political careers. Sincerely, I will be fine if I lose my house seat because you know what? I will know I did what I thought was right to save this country from fiscal ruin.' In fact, Ryan tells ABC News that Republicans should be fighting for his Medicare plan as part of the current talks with the White House over raising the debt ceiling. 'It is part of these debt ceiling talks,' Ryan said. 'We're the ones who actually put the specifics on the table -- \$6.2 trillion in savings over the next ten years. We put a budget up--we passed a budget, brought it to the table. Where are we now? It's been 754 days since the Senate Democrats proposed, yet alone, passed a budget. They're not offering any solutions, putting nothing on the table.' Ryan's plan would replace the current Medicare program with a program that allows seniors to choose from a menu of government-subsidized private insurance plans. The changes would not go into effect until the year 2021 and would not affect anybody who is now over age 55."

### **Does Rep. Ryan feel any responsibility for the outcome of Tuesday's special election in New York's 26th Congressional district?**

"The president and his party, they basically decided to medi-scare. They decided to shamelessly demagogue and distort what we're proposing to try and scare seniors to get votes," Ryan told Karl. "It did work to scare seniors. Now I believe that in a year and a half time that we have, that facts are going to get out and people are going to understand this problem." (h/t to ABC's

Gregory Simmons for expert camera work). <http://abcn.ws/l7Rlcf>

**Did you know ABC's "Subway Series" has its own website? Check it out for current and archived interviews:** <http://abcnews.go.com/politics/subwayseries>

**ON TODAY'S "TOP LINE."** ABC's Rick Klein and Amy Walter interview Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, to get his take on yesterday's votes in the Senate and how his party is handling Medicare reform and other issues. Also on the program, a clip of Jon Karl's interview with Rep. Paul Ryan (preview above). **Watch "Top Line" LIVE at 12:00 p.m. Eastern.** <http://bit.ly/ABCTopLine>

**"TOP LINE" REPLAY: STEVE ISRAEL.** The New York Congressman and chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said the message from NY-26 was loud and clear: "There were three fundamental lessons that both Democrats and Republicans learned from the special election in New York, and they are Medicare, Medicare, and Medicare." Rep. Israel added: "The reason that a Democrat was elected to Congress in one of the most Republican and conservative districts -- not only in New York, but in the United States -- was because Republicans, independents and Democratic voters rejected the premise that we can terminate Medicare in order to fund tax cuts for big oil companies. That is what the Republicans sought to do, and it was roundly rejected in the special election in New York-26."

**Israel underscored his comments today in an Op-Ed in USA Today:** "Members of Congress have a choice: Keep our promise to seniors or cut the billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies to Big Oil and tax breaks for multimillionaires and billionaires. Democrats choose seniors. Under the Republican budget, a millionaire gets a \$100,000 tax break but a senior gets an additional \$6,000 health care bill. Democrats will fight those wrong priorities. Democrats offered to engage with Republicans in a constructive and responsible negotiation to strengthen, improve and reform Medicare. But the Republican plan to end Medicare is non-negotiable." <http://usat.ly/ipMkcn>

## THE BUZZ

**THE TEMPTATION OF RICK PERRY.** Associates of Texas Gov. Rick Perry have been making noises lately that seem to suggest the Republican governor is still contemplating jumping into the 2012 presidential race. In an interview that aired last night, Fox News' Greta Van Susteren asked Perry if he wasn't the least bit tempted to run for president. "At the end of the day, for the next week, I've got a legislative session to focus on," Perry said. "My hope is that person will come forward that can win the presidency that we can all get behind." Van Susteren pressed: "Are you tempted?" Perry replied: "Oh, I can't say I'm not tempted, but the fact is: this is something I don't want to do." <http://bit.ly/lWdWdv>

**THE EDWARDS STRATEGY.** "Former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards appears ready to gamble on a high-stakes confrontation in federal court in a case that will pit his ravaged reputation and self-admittedly abominable behavior against a government case Edwards' camp

sees as relying on unreliable witnesses and hazy law," writes Politico's Ben Smith. "Two sources familiar with the case confirmed to POLITICO Tuesday that the U.S. Attorney in Raleigh has signaled that he is on the brink of indicting Edwards on felony campaign finance charges linked to his cover-up of the affair that destroyed his marriage and his political career. Justice Department officials declined to comment on the potential charges, which were first reported by ABC News. Two other sources in the Edwards camp also said that his own legal team is in deep discussions with their client – himself an almost legendary star of the North Carolina trial bar – over whether he should accept the risk and expense of a criminal trial or sacrifice his law license and possibly his freedom with a guilty plea that might nonetheless represent a real chance for reinventing his tattered public image. There were widespread media reports Wednesday that Edwards was actively considering a plea agreement, and trying to discern the inner motives of the former Democratic vice presidential nominee - once surrounded by legions of aides and strategists but now relegated to relying on a small band of lawyers and diehard friends - is unquestionably difficult." <http://politi.co/j7m0DJ>

**FORECAST FOR GRIDLOCK WAS RIGHT.** "In the build-up to last November's mid-term elections, some political analysts wondered if a divided Congress would prove to be a recipe for gridlock. They were right," ABC's Matthew Jaffe notes. "Five months into the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, lawmakers on Capitol Hill have accomplished... well, nothing much at all. In fact, they have struggled just to do their most basic job: keep the government running. To date Republicans in charge of the House have passed Rep. Paul Ryan's controversial budget resolution and a slew of other GOP-backed measures that stand absolutely no chance of success in the Democrat-controlled Senate. In the upper chamber of Congress, meanwhile, Democrats have settled on an equally unproductive strategy: don't bother to pass anything at all. Ultimately, this Congress may have less to do with accomplishing anything good and a lot more to do with preventing anything bad. In April, a contentious fight over federal funding was only resolved hours before the government was due to shut down. Take the ongoing battle over raising the country's debt ceiling. Months ago, the Obama administration asked Congress to raise the \$14.3 trillion debt limit to prevent a default that economists warn could trigger devastating consequences. Whenever an increase to the limit was necessary in the past, Congress never failed to raise the debt ceiling. Naturally, even as the nation last week finally hit its red-ink limit, this Congress has done... absolutely nothing." <http://abcn.ws/mxci8Q>

**INSIDE 'OBAMAWORLD 2012'** "As big as a football field and nearly as empty, Barack Obama's re-election headquarters looks like a start-up gone wrong. Wires sprout like weeds from the carpeting, legions of bookshelves stand empty, and the swing-state maps hastily pinned to the wall are freebies from the AAA auto club down the street. In one room that could fit hundreds of people, just a few dozen sit at long desks. Most don't look old enough to buy a beer," Time Magazine's Michael Scherer reports. "But if you want to find out why the President has set up shop in a Chicago skyscraper 18 months before Election Day, you need only peek into the office of Jeremy Bird, 32, the campaign's field director, at the far end of the room. He pulls a name from a database on his laptop, picks up his phone and dials in the hope of reminding one more person of the 2008 magic. "I just wanted to call, and first I wanted to thank you," Bird says when a volunteer from Obama's first presidential campaign answers in North Carolina. ... In Obamaworld parlance, this is a "one-on-one," a cold call that aides hope will form the foundation for next year's re-election effort. This summer, the Obama campaign expects to arrange hundreds of thousands of these individual contacts, over the phone or in person, with just about everyone who gave his or her time back when Obama was an upstart outsider three years ago. To accomplish the massive

task, the campaign is launching a replay of a program started in 2008 called Summer Organizers, in which more than 1,500 volunteers have committed to work 20- or 40-hour weeks through the summer. In the first week of June, the Obama campaign and the Democratic National Committee will hold 42 two-day training sessions in 40 states." <http://ti.me/kcC0uX>

**NOTABLE:** Military Families United, an organization founded by families of U.S. soldiers killed in action, introduced the Gold Star Family Registry at a Memorial Day reception on Capitol Hill last night. The Registry is a database of the country's fallen soldiers dating back to WWII, and it is meant to serve as an online monument to honor their service and sacrifice. On hand last night was Merrilee Carlson, President of Military Families United and Gold Star mother to Sgt. Michael Carlson, who died in Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as members of Congress and representatives from other organizations. <http://www.goldstarfamilyregistry.com/>

## WHO'S TWEETING?

**@clairecmc:** Here are the photographs I took while in Joplin on Tuesday. <http://bit.ly/iR96iV>

**@HotlineJosh:** Quinnipiac finds Obama gets a big bounce in the battleground state of Florida, **@HotlineSteve** reports <http://njour.nl/jRXuYI>

**@pwire:** Plouffe: "I can't tell you what a gift, if we use it properly, this year is." <http://pwire.at/ikyIBK>

**@daveweigel:** Gallup poll: Herman **Cain** at 8%, outpolling **Pawlenty**, Huntsman. <http://slate.me/jlix9v>

**@jeneps:** Dick Cheney "worship[s] the ground Paul Ryan walks on," but a presidential run would ruin him. <http://politi.co/mFGHPV>

**@KYTrey:** 17 years later, I once again processed to the Yard with Kirkland House, for Commencement, this time with Class of 2011. [#Harvard11](#)

## POLITICAL RADAR:

\* Mitt Romney will be in Chicago to discuss jobs and the economy with business owners at Gino's East.

\* Tim Pawlenty visits Cirtronics, an electronics manufacturing company in Milford, NH.

\* Newt Gingrich attends a breakfast organized by the Seacoast Federation of Republican Women in Portsmouth, NH. Later he holds a meet and greet with members of the Mount Washington Valley Republican Committee in Conway, NH where he will also tour Tee Enterprises, a manufacturing facility.

\* Michele Bachmann delivers remarks at the Polk County GOP dinner in Des Moines, Iowa.

**The Note Futures Calendar:** <http://abcn.ws/ZI9gV>

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