



# Laughing at another Spectacular Obamacare Failure

By Daniel J. Mitchell

May 8, 2014

As you can imagine, there's a lot to choose from in [the contest for the most spectacular waste of tax dollars](#).

But the politicians in Oregon must really want the prize, because they managed to flush several hundred million dollars down a rat hole by putting together a state-run Obamacare website that has to be abandoned because it is so dysfunctional.



And if the Oregon website is so bad that it's switching to the much-derided Washington Obamacare website, it must be a disaster of unparalleled dimensions!

Here are some excerpts from [an AP report](#).

After months of trying to get its problem-plagued online health exchange to work, Oregon on Friday officially gave up on the state portal... Officials say fixing the existing system would be too costly at \$78 million and would take too long. ...Oregon's exchange is seen as the worst in more than a dozen states that developed their own online health insurance marketplaces. The general public still can't use Cover Oregon's website to sign up for coverage in one sitting. Instead, Oregonians must use a time-consuming hybrid paper-online process to sign up for insurance — despite \$134 million the state paid Oracle Corp. to build the online exchange. ...In March, the federal Government Accountability Office announced an investigation of Oregon's exchange, including looking at whether the federal government can reclaim grant money given to Cover Oregon if taxpayer funds were mismanaged.

Heck, it's [not just the GAO](#) that's investigating.

The FBI reportedly is probing the failed launch of Oregon's ObamaCare insurance exchange, joining several other agencies looking into the multimillion-dollar program that was scrapped last month. ...the FBI has interviewed several people as part of the inquiry. The Oregonian reported that the bureau held a 90-minute meeting with a former Republican lawmaker who detailed potential wrongdoing — including suspicions that the state showed the feds a

misleading demonstration to keep money flowing. ...A U.S. House committee already is probing the Oregon debacle, as is the Government Accountability Office. The state received more than \$300 million in federal grants to launch and operate the health care system. Much of what it has spent so far has gone to Oracle Corp.

But let's be fair. Not all of the \$300 million was squandered on the failed website.

The politicians also coughed up \$3 million for this video, which presumably was supposed to lure people to the non-working website but probably just made people think Oregon is infested by patchouli-soaked deadbeats.

The video almost stands by itself as a form of left-wing self parody.

But what makes it especially amusing is that it generated this amusing segment on one of HBO's programs.

Well done.

I don't watch TV, so I don't know if the guy who did this segment is on the right, the left, or somewhere in between.



But it would be nice to have a talk show host who is willing to go after all sides, unlike Colbert and Stewart who clearly bend over backwards to curry favor with the White House.

Anyhow, if you like videos that use humor to mock government-run healthcare, here are some good options.

\*The head of the National Socialist Workers Party [finds out](#) he can't keep his health plan.

\*A creepy version of Uncle Sam [wants to know](#) about your sex life.

\*[Young people discover](#) that they're screwed by Obamacare.

\*One of the biggest statistics of the 20th century [is angry](#) that the Obamacare exchanges don't work.

\*A cartoon video showing [how to buy coffee](#) in an Obamacare world.

But never forget that this is a serious issue. Government has [screwed up the healthcare system](#), yet politicians then [use the mess they create](#) to justify even more intervention.

The [only effective solution](#) is economic liberty.

**Daniel J. Mitchell** is a top expert on tax reform and supply-side tax policy. Mitchell is a strong advocate of a flat tax and international tax competition. Prior to joining Cato, Mitchell was a senior fellow with The Heritage Foundation, and an economist for Senator Bob Packwood and the Senate Finance Committee.