

Howard Dean criticizes Obamacare 'health-care rationing'

By Gina Young – July 31st, 2013

Yesterday, prominent member of the Democratic Party, Howard Dean criticized the rate-setting aspect of the Affordable Care Act. In his op-ed for the Wall Street Journal, Dean claims

“One major problem is the so-called Independent Payment Advisory Board. The IPAB is essentially a health-care rationing body. By setting doctor reimbursement rates for Medicare and determining which procedures and drugs will be covered and at what price, the IPAB will be able to stop certain treatments its members do not favor by simply setting rates to levels where no doctor or hospital will perform them. There does have to be control of costs in our health-care system. However, rate setting—the essential mechanism of the IPAB—has a 40-year track record of failure. What ends up happening in these schemes... is that patients and physicians get aggravated because bureaucrats in either the private or public sector are making medical decisions without knowing the patients... these kinds of schemes do not control costs. The medical system simply becomes more bureaucratic.”

Perhaps, the reality of Dean’s comments that may leave even more democrats unnerved, is that he actually agrees with Tea Party favorite, Sarah Palin, regarding her “death panels” comment. As a medical doctor, Dean’s perspective on the “health-care rationing” is one of which both sides of the political aisle may want to listen.

Howard Dean is the most recent democrat to step forward and speak out against certain parts of the law which are in need of revision. According to the CATO Institute, “Earlier this month, 35 Democratic congressmen voted in favor of eliminating the employer mandate, and 22 voted to kill the individual mandate as well. The Teamsters, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and other unions have written to the administration demanding changes to the law. And even Democratic lawmakers in Massachusetts have voted to seek a waiver from some of Obamacare’s requirements.”

We seem to be in much the same place that we were last year this time: threats of a government shutdown by the end of September. Democrats want to raise the debt ceiling as part of the Continuing Resolution, but are meeting resistance by Republicans who want meaningful spending cuts. As part of this, some Republicans are willing to not pass a Continuing Resolution to fund the government’s obligations without delaying or repealing the aforementioned aspects of the Affordable Care Act as a stipulation of raising the debt ceiling. Perhaps, We the People should take heart though, this is what the system of checks-and-balances is all about, right?

