



Right still pushing 'don't enroll' crusade

By: Steve Benen – November 15, 2013

Of all the things conservatives have done to sabotage and derail the Affordable Care Act – and good lord, is this a long list – nothing seems quite as offensive as the right's campaign to encourage those without coverage to stay uninsured, on purpose, to advance an ideological cause.

Regular readers may recall that we covered this quite a bit over the summer. Conservatives launched organized efforts to convince the uninsured to voluntarily "refuse to enroll" – because if fewer people participate in the system, costs would soar, and in theory the system could become unsustainable. Struggling families will of course be completely screwed in this scenario, but for the right, that's a small price to pay – and a sacrifice they're willing to see others make.

Eric Lach, referencing a report from the Alaska Dispatch, noted yesterday that the campaign is still very much underway. Indeed, it appears far-right Floridians are now lobbying Alaskans to stay uninsured on purpose.

The websites, dontenrollalaska.org and knowthefactsalaska.org, strike different tones and do not identify their creators, but they share similar layouts and were created on the same day in September. Facebook pages for both groups were also created on the same day, and, according to the Dispatch, television ads for both groups have been running during the same commercial breaks in Alaska.

And while the websites don't identify the creators or backers of either group, a representative from the Alaska chapter of the Koch brothers-backed Americans for Prosperity told the Dispatch that a group called the Foundation for Government Accountability was "directly involved" in both websites.

Based in Naples, Fla., the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit that "promotes public policies that achieve limited, constitutional government and a robust economy that will be an engine for job creation across the states." One of the foundation's directors is Robert Levy, the chairman of the board of the Cato Institute, the Washington, D.C. think tank with a long and complicated relationship with the Koch brothers.

Even by the standards of contemporary conservatism, there's something morally bankrupt about wealthy far-right forces targeting struggling Americans and telling them to go without access to basic health – on purpose – apparently because they don't like the president.

The debate over health care reform has never been especially responsible or high-minded, but this is uniquely ugly.

Indeed, freshman Sen. Angus King, a mild-mannered independent from Maine, recently expressed his understandable contempt for those behind schemes like these.

"That's a scandal – those people are guilty of murder in my opinion," King told Brian Beutler in September. "Some of those people they persuade are going to end up dying because they don't have health insurance. For people who do that to other people in the name of some obscure political ideology is one of the grossest violations of our humanity I can think of. This absolutely drives me crazy."

Senator, you're not the only one.