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Should Barack Obama destroy the secret ballot? **YES** **NO**



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Wednesday, August 19, 2009

The Nonprofit Motive [Ramesh Ponnuru]

Few conservatives have any principled objection to non-profit health insurers governed by their members—in other words, to co-ops. Most conservatives believe that the co-ops are being discussed in Washington, D.C., as a way to sneak through the "public option" — in effect, it's single payer at two removes. So most Republicans when talking about the idea have stressed that they don't want a new government insurer run on co-op lines, or a big government-subsidized co-op, while some have allowed that they are fine with co-ops in principle. Which point to emphasize is a political judgment. Given the context in which co-ops came up, I think Republicans are right to stress the Trojan-horse angle. So, in short, I think Reihan Salam is wrong about this question (especially since there is no great national outcry for more co-ops). And I think Erick Erickson is right to warn that support for co-ops in theory could pave the way for a disguised public option. (He is, however, a little too tough on Senator Enzi, whose *USA Today* op-ed gets the issue right: "The co-op approach has potential and should be considered, but it must not get hijacked in the House-Senate conference as a backdoor way to get a government-run program in place.")

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