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**Plus: "The Pursuit of John Yoo" with takes by Roger Pilon and Mary Frances Berry**

**June 24, 2009**

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**Roger Pilon**, Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute:  
*...The "public option" is a Trojan Horse for "single payer"*

Regarding President Obama's proposal for a public healthcare option, let me add a simple point to those made below by my colleague, **David Boaz**. If the premiums for such a plan were higher than premiums for comparable private plans, then no one would subscribe except the uninsurable, if they could afford to. If premiums and benefits were comparable to those of private plans, then what's the point of a public plan? But if premiums were lower and benefits comparable (initially), as the president implies would be the case, then why would anyone stay in a private plan?

No, the "public option" is a Trojan Horse for "single payer," government-run health care. The president speaks of "not-for-profit" and "low administrative costs." As with Amtrak? And so much else the government runs? We already have a model for the public option. It's Medicare. Seniors love it (mostly), but it's going broke. The siren song of something-for-nothing continues to allure. We enjoy it as we ride the train, subsidized, to New York. But health care is serious business. When the bill comes due we can't ask taxpayers in other parts of the country to subsidize the fare. We are those others. So we either pay more and more – and there are limits – or we enjoy less and less, as with every such system in the world. And the only "choice" we'll have is to vote every few years. I'll take the choices the market offers any day.

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