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Driving the Conversation:

Why is Obama losing the battle for public opinion on health care? Can he turn it around and, if so, how?

Plus the policeman, the professor and the president

July 30, 2009

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Roger Pilon, Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute:

It should hardly surprise that President Obama is losing the battle for public opinion on health care.

His inflated promises got him elected. But enough Americans are now focusing on those promises to realize that they're empty. We don't know how we're going to pay for Medicare's promises, looming just ahead, yet Obama is promising vastly more. He's up against reality, and Americans know it.

As Politico **reports** this morning, the congressional coalition that looked like it was forming yesterday is already breaking apart, with liberals like Jerrold Nadler and Barney Frank saying they won't vote for the current watered-down "deal." They and their cohorts seem perfectly happy to live in their tax-the-rich dreamworld. But that dream leads inevitably (taxation has its inherent limits) to rationing healthcare for everyone. I've just returned from two weeks in Europe, where the complaint is that they can't get the miracle drugs that Americans take for granted. Their socialized health care systems can't afford them (or won't pay for them – the decisions are political, after all). More and more Americans are coming to understand that that's what's in store for us under Obamacare, and that's why he's losing the battle.

There are huge problems with America's health care system, but further socializing the delivery of health care is not the answer. To the contrary, as in so much else, the socialization of what is, in the end, a private good, is at the root of our present problems.

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