

TOWNHALL FINANCE

‘Leavitt’ Is Republican for ‘Solyndra’

Michael F. Cannon

Mike Leavitt is a Republican, a former Utah governor, a former Secretary of Health and Human Services under President George W. Bush, and now owns a firm called Leavitt Partners, which makes money by helping states implement ObamaCare's health insurance "exchanges" and take advantage of ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion. Let's stipulate from the outset that Leavitt and his staff are doing what they think is best for the nation. Still, as [this article](#) in yesterday's *New York Times* explores, it's odd that Mitt Romney chose as one of his top advisers a guy who's profiting from ObamaCare:

If Republicans in Congress agree on anything, it is their desire to eradicate President Obama's health care law. But one of the top advisers to Mitt Romney, the party's likely presidential nominee, has spent the last two years advising states and private insurers on how to comply with the law...

Mr. Romney has named Mr. Leavitt — a longtime friend, former governor of Utah and former federal health secretary — to plan the transition for what both hope will be a Romney administration.

Mr. Leavitt's full-time job is running his consulting company, Leavitt Partners, which is based in Salt Lake City and has advised officials in Mississippi, New Mexico and Pennsylvania, among other states...

Michael F. Cannon, director of health policy studies at the Cato Institute, said: "It is strange to see Mr. Leavitt, a former Republican governor and former secretary of health and human services, helping and encouraging states to carry out this law for which Republicans have so much antipathy. It deepens suspicion as to whether Romney is sufficiently committed to repealing the Obama health care law."

Twila Brase, president of the Citizens' Council for Health Freedom, a free market group that is mobilizing opposition to an exchange in Minnesota, said: "Mike Leavitt is an enabler of Obamacare. He has taken advantage of Obamacare to expand his own business, instead of helping governors resist a federal takeover of health care."

Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius has thrown [nearly a billion dollars](#) at states in a desperate attempt to bribe them into establishing Exchanges. We do not yet know how much of that cash has found its way to Leavitt Partners:

Natalie Gochnour, a spokeswoman for Leavitt Partners, said its work with states was only part of its business, but she refused to say how much the company had been paid for such work.

Perhaps some day we will, and "Leavitt" will become synonymous with "Solyndra."

Also, by my count the *Times* article devoted eight column-inches to such pro-Exchange nonsense as the idea that an ObamaCare Exchange could "run on free market principles" or Leavitt's claim that "continued inaction by states risks an Obama-style federal exchange being foisted upon a state." Yet the *Times* cited no one who challenges those claims. I have no problem with the *Times* posing difficult questions to Romney. Why should ObamaCare get a pass?

