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Republican Hypocrisy on ObamaCare

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WRITTEN BY WILLIAM F. JASPER
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Item: Mitt Romney stated on his Free & Strong America PAC website: "President Obama's new healthcare law imposes higher taxes, cuts Medicare, contains insurance price controls and expands the size of our federal government. It is unhealthy for America. That is why it is critical that we elect fiscally-responsible conservative leaders who will work to repeal the worst aspects of Obamacare, restore commonsense principles to healthcare, and focus on getting our economy back on track." 6 tweets

Item: Newsmax correspondent Ronald Kessler wrote on April 1, 2010: "President Obama has handed Republicans a winning slogan for the November elections: Repeal healthcare legislation." The repeal issue, said Kessler, "will give Republicans a powerful boost to taking back control of the House and Senate in November. When they do, 'Repeal It' will be more than a slogan. It will be reality."

Item: Karl Rove, the former senior advisor and Deputy Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush, wrote in the online edition of the Wall Street Journal on March 25, 2010: "Republicans have a powerful rallying cry in 'repeal, replace and reform.'"

Correction: Much of the current Republican bombast against the legislation is disingenuous, at best, concealing the fact that many of the leading Republicans posing as conservatives helped grease the skids for ObamaCare with their votes and support for earlier federal intrusions into healthcare, especially the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) passed in 1997 by the Republican-controlled Congress, and George Bush's massive 2003 Medicare prescription drug program. Or, in the case of Mitt Romney, his mini-ObamaCare, which he signed while Governor of Massachusetts.

Many of the Republican Party leaders are also revealing their duplicity by raucously brandishing their "Repeal ObamaCare" slogans at Tea Party rallies and conservative gatherings, while gradually changing their positions from "repeal" to "repeal and replace" – the message being, of course, that instead of staunchly opposing the Obama federalization, they will support a kinder, gentler version of the national program.

The case of Mitt Romney is particularly galling. The well-oiled Romney machine recently scored a victory in the April 10, 2010 Southern Republican Leadership Conference (SRLC) Presidential Poll, beating out Rep. Ron Paul by a single vote, 438-437. In February, Romney posted second to Rep. Paul, garnering 22 percent of the presidential straw poll votes at the national Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) to Ron Paul's 31 percent. Romney is frequently cited as the top White House contender for the GOP in 2012. However, his past may be catching up to him, and on no issue is he likely to face more problems than on the striking similarities between Romneycare and ObamaCare, which the Wall Street Journal has referred to as "fraternal policy twins."

"Obamacare largely is Romneycare," wrote Daniel Gross in Newsweek for March 29, 2010. "The concept of attaining near-universal health insurance in a defined geographic area using a combination of a mandate, subsidies, and cost-control efforts is essentially what Romney did in Massachusetts earlier this decade," noted Gross, who suggested that Obama name Romney as his healthcare czar.

The Cato Institute, a conservative/libertarian think tank, has likewise noted the Obama-Romney family resemblance. "As President Obama himself has pointed out, Romney is the guy who created the prototype for ObamaCare," says Cato's executive vice president David Boaz. "How can he lead the charge against a health care plan that is modeled on his own?"

In an April 12 online piece for The New American, Thomas R. Eddlem reported that Romney is "campaigning against an Obama health care plan almost identical to the one he signed into law as Governor of Massachusetts." Eddlem continued:

"Conservative" Romneycare was made possible only by many new tax increases, including gigantic income tax increases (as much as \$1,116 per family in Massachusetts). Mitt Romney acknowledged on a March 7 Fox News Sunday interview that "We do insist that people buy insurance or pay their own way. And if they – if they don't buy insurance, they'll find that their taxes are higher." Romneycare's individual tax penalties are even stiffer than those under Obama-Care.

Romney isn't the only Republican playing the hypocrisy game on healthcare. Many of the Republicans loudly decrying the evils of ObamaCare have pushed for and voted for similar or only slightly less onerous

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legislation.

In 1997, Republicans ripped a page from the Democrats' phony "compassion" playbook and created the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to provide health insurance coverage for young children. Of course, they have no more constitutional authority to provide children with insurance than they do to provide them with McDonald's Happy Meals, Xbox games, or Teletubby dolls.

"The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is a partnership between federal and state governments that was created in 1997 – thanks to a Republican majority in Congress," noted Lawrence M. Vance in an October 22, 2009 online article for CampaignforLiberty.com entitled "Health Care Hypocrisy." The key operative in that venture was Republican "conservative" Senator Orrin Hatch, who teamed up with Senator Ted Kennedy to promote that misbegotten package, at the cost of a huge increase in government spending and intervention. Vance then reminded readers of additional recent history:

And then there is the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 – thanks again to a Republican majority in Congress. Initially projected to cost about \$400 billion (which is still \$400 billion too much), it is now projected to cost over a trillion dollars....

This Republican version of health care reform was introduced on June 25, 2003, by the Republican House Speaker Dennis Hastert. It was supported by the Republican House Majority leader Tom DeLay. It was supported by the Republican House Majority Whip Roy Blunt. It was support [sic] by the Republican Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. It was supported by the Senate Majority Whip Mitch McConnell. It passed the House (220-215) and the Senate (54-44) in late 2003 with overwhelming Republican support. It was signed into law by the Republican President George Bush on December 8, 2003.... Only 25 Republicans in the House and 9 Republicans in the Senate voted against health care reform in 2003.

"Since conservatives have short memories when it comes to Republicans, let's take a look at how the Republicans currently in Congress who oppose Obama's health care reforms supported Bush's health care reforms back in 2003," Vance said. He continued: "There are 28 Republicans currently in the Senate who were in the Senate back in 2003. Of this number, 24 voted for health care reform in 2003."

"There are 122 Republicans currently in the House who were in the House back in 2003," Vance noted. "Of this number, 108 of them voted for health care reform in 2003." Many of the Republicans loudly denouncing ObamaCare as socialized medicine were only too willing to enact their own Republican version of the same.

"Republicans are good at opposing health care reform when it is Hillarycare or Obamacare, but not very good when it is Bushcare or Republican care," observed Lawrence Vance.

Now Republicans are lambasting not only the *content* of the new law, but also the arm-twisting, bribes, and underhanded methods employed by the Democratic leadership to pass ObamaCare. This is really rich coming from the likes of Karl Rove and Bush HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, two of the Republicans doing the arm-twisting and bribing in 2003 to get votes for the Bush "reform" bill.

"Over the course of the almost three-hour long vote – the longest vote in the history of the House – dissenting conservative Republicans were subject to arm-twisting, brow-beating, and outright threats," reported the *Weekly Standard* on December 8, 2003.

"Tommy Thompson succeeded in wooing several Democrats to vote for the bill who had opposed it in the past," reported David Freddoso of *Human Events*. He did this, said Freddoso, "by 'handing out' over a billion dollars [sic] worth of discretionary spending to anyone willing to switch." Then there was the threat to fire Medicaid's chief actuary, Richard Foster, if he told the truth that Bushcare was likely to be many billions of dollars more expensive than the administration was claiming.

With this dismal failure of scruples and principles, is it at all surprising that many of the Republicans who recently pledged to fight unwaveringly for repeal of ObamaCare are already talking instead about "reforming" and "replacing" it with an Obama-lite GOP version?

– Photo: AP Images

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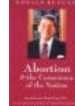
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