

## Conservatives Win Again

by Kay

Thanks to commenter [SpotWeld](#) for [this](#):

In the spring of 2009, a Republican strategist settled on a brilliant and powerful attack line for President Barack Obama's ambitious plan to overhaul America's health insurance system. Frank Luntz, a consultant famous for his phraseology, urged GOP leaders to call it a "government takeover. Takeovers are like coups," Luntz wrote in a 28-page memo. "They both lead to dictators and a loss of freedom."

PolitiFact editors and reporters have chosen "government takeover of health care" as the 2010 Lie of the Year. Uttered by dozens of politicians and pundits, it played an important role in shaping public opinion about the health care plan and was a significant factor in the Democrats' shellacking in the November elections.

The phrase is simply not true. Said Jonathan Oberlander, a professor of health policy at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill: "The label 'government takeover' has no basis in reality, but instead reflects a political dynamic where conservatives label any increase in government authority in health care as a 'takeover.' "

We asked incoming House Speaker John Boehner's office why Republican leaders repeat the phrase when it has repeatedly been shown to be incorrect. Michael Steel, Boehner's spokesman, replied, "We believe that the job-killing ObamaCare law will result in a government takeover of health care. That's why we have pledged to repeal it, and replace it with common-sense reforms that actually lower costs."

It's a belief, so not therefore not a lie. They never said it had a factual basis.

The phrase appears more than 90 times on Boehner's website, [GOPLeader.gov](#). It was mentioned eight times in the 48-page Republican campaign platform "A Pledge to America" as part of their plan to "repeal and replace the government takeover of health care." The Republican National Committee's website mentions a government takeover of health care more than 200 times. Conservative groups and tea party organizations joined the chorus. It was used by FreedomWorks, the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute. In 2010 alone, "government takeover" was mentioned 28 times in the Washington Post, 77 times in Politico and 79 times on CNN. In most transcripts we examined, Republican leaders used the phrase without being challenged by interviewers. For example, during Boehner's Jan. 31 appearance on Meet the Press, Boehner said it five times. But not once was he challenged about it.

CNN beat Politico in shilling for the GOP in 2010, so that's an upset right there. I had Politico as the favorite.

Last year Republicans (and allied organizations) won for "death panels".

Any guesses on The Big Lie in 2011?

