

# The Star-Ledger

## Young voters weren't stupid; they just failed to read my column quoting Ron Paul

By [Paul Mulshine](#)  
November 12, 2014

A lot of talk-radio types and bloggers are having fun pointing out how the architect of Obamacare [called Americans voters "stupid"](#) for permitting it to be passed into law despite the way in which it shortchanges young people.

Those people don't seem to be all that bright either. How did they miss out on the obvious fact that Jonathan Gruber was the architect of Romneycare as well - and it relied on putting the same tricks past the people?

The M.I.T. prof had a central role in designing both programs and both rely on the same linchpin, an individual mandate backed up by a tax penalty.

Gruber himself has said the two are the same, according to [this article in the Washington Post](#).

In the article, Gruber is cited as the architect of both Romneycare and Obamacare and also stating what it obvious to anyone who understands the issue, ["They're the same F-ing bill!"](#)

I asked about the difference between this plan and the kind that was espoused by former House speaker Newt Gingrich back then (and, briefly, in May of this year).

"Zero difference," he said. "This is, to my mind, the most blatantly obvious case of politics trumping policy I've ever seen in my life. Because this is an idea, that four or five years ago, Republicans were touting. A guy from the Heritage Foundation spoke at the bill signing in Massachusetts about how good this bill was."

Exactly. In fact there were three Republicans in the 2008 GOP primary who backed the individual mandate, Romney, Newt Gingrich and former Illinois Gov. Tommy Thompson. The Republican Party leadership was perfectly happy with that fact.

I wasn't. At the time I think I was the sole pundit in America pointing out that the mandate is an abomination to conservatives for the obvious reason that it violates the right to contract. The only candidate I could find on the GOP side making that point was Ron Paul. And the place he made it was in [my column of 2007](#) on the topic.

That column got picked up [on the Ron Paul blogs](#) and pretty much nowhere else. The Beltway RINOs hadn't yet realized that they opposed the individual mandate for a simple reason - they didn't.

That opposition emerged [only after Obamacare had already been passed](#) and they realized that it might be reversed in court through challenging the mandate. But that wasn't based on principle. It was pure opportunism. As far as I know, the only principled opposition to the mandate in the GOP rests with Drs. Ron and Rand Paul and few others who have followed their lead.

The rest were content to nominate for president in 2012 the same man who had pioneered the mandate - and who [absurdly claimed to oppose Obamacare](#).

Even as late as the summer of 2009, when I wrote the column below, the mainstream GOP had yet to come out in opposition to the mandate. If Gruber wonders why the young did not rise in opposition to Obamacare, you'll find your answer below. The RINOs were too busy pandering to the senior citizen lobby to mention to young people that they were the cash cows for the oldsters.

But it was obvious to us conservatives, as you can see from the column below I wrote in the summer of 2009.

It was headlined, "It's the Young Who'll Be Burned by Health Reform." I present it for your reading pleasure:

**BACK IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS**, young people were different. For one thing, they were a lot younger.

I realized that when I ran into Andy Beck outside the school in Red Bank where U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone (D-6th Dist.) was holding a town-hall meeting on health care the other evening.

I was interviewing people in the line, which stretched around the block, when Beck came by asking if anyone had seen some people with Hula Hoops. As an aging baby-boomer who was there for the creation of the Hula Hoop, I found my curiosity piqued. I asked Beck what Hula Hoops had to do with health care.

It turned out that the 42-year-old Beck was with a group of people who travel annually to Burning Man, a New Age festival held out West that centers around the immolation of a giant wooden sculpture of a man. He had driven down from Bedminster to link up with the group.

"We were supposed to do, like, an event to help bring attention to social issues concerning our health care system," said Beck. "We're kind of artists, activists, free-thinking people."

Artists, activists and free-thinking people don't often have the sort of jobs that provide health insurance, he said, so they were hoping the feds would provide it for them.

To that end, they were planning to put on a Hula Hoop show on the school's lawn. But that show would be nothing compared to the shows at the festival, which begins next week in Nevada, he told me.

There, people will perform dances with flaming Hula Hoops.

"Flaming Hula Hoops?" I replied. "I can see why you guys want health insurance."

But will they get it? Or will they just get a mandate to buy insurance, perhaps at a higher price than they would pay today?

That's a question many young people haven't thought about. But Pallone's been thinking about it. He sits on a key committee and has helped in drafting the bill now before the House. As part of that job, he bravely faces down audiences full of irate citizens, as he did twice this week.

There were so many of them in Red Bank that the hearing had to be split into three sessions. The second was the rowdiest. After a spontaneous rendition of "God Bless America," the audience members strode to the microphones and yelled at Pallone. One guy I'd met outside, Jason Creveling of Dunellen, held up a handwritten poster with the definition of "communism" on it and asked, "Is Webster's Dictionary wrong or are you a communist?"

Pallone assured the crowd he's not a commie and that his plan is not socialized medicine. But that depends what you mean by "socialized." It's true the plan would not socialize the machinery of medical care, at least not immediately. But it would certainly socialize the risk. And that's not financially favorable to young people.

Frank was frank about that when I interviewed him between sessions. If the plan is so good, I asked, then why must it include a mandate that everyone be forced to participate?

"If you eliminate the individual mandate, then you're going to have a lot of people who are healthy and wealthy who will not participate," said Pallone. "And like any insurance pool, if you take out the people that don't need the care it drives the cost up for everyone else."

I admired his honesty, if not his plan.

"The people that don't need the care" are overwhelmingly young people. And they're the ones who should be protesting this plan, not the senior citizens. Baby Boomers like Pallone are pulling a fast one on them.

That's the theory of an economist who's been studying this issue very intently,

Jogadeesh Gokhale of the free-market Cato Institute. The real reason the Democrats want to push young people into the public option, says Gokhale, is that their premiums can be used to put a Band-Aid on Medicare, which is going broke.

"This is basically generational warfare," he said.

In Gokhale's opinion, and mine, opponents of the plan are making a mistake by focusing on the public option. The real problem is the individual mandate.

"Without the mandate, the young won't sign up," he said.

But once the mandate's in place, the feds can keep ratcheting up the requirements for private health plans so that young people are forced to take the public option. And then the kids become the cash cows for us baby boomers.

If somebody could communicate that to all of those young and not-so-young people who will gather in the Nevada desert next week, I have a strong suspicion the man they'd be burning would be a Democrat.