

# Blog Watch

« Tuesday Roundup

## GOP Fires Back While One of Their Own Gets Pummeled

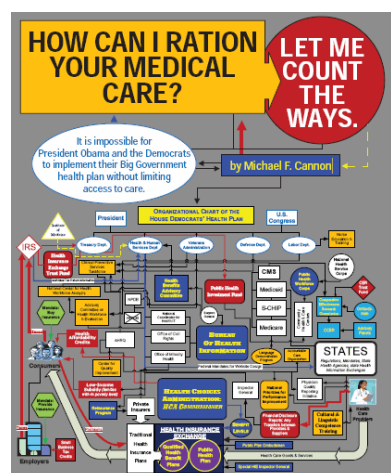
Kate Steadman, KHN

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Republicans are attempting to prove to their Democratic critics that they're not the party of "no" when it comes to health reform.

Jeffrey Anderson, who worked at HHS during the Bush administration, writes in the [Weekly Standard](#) that Republicans need to offer a plan that is "as short and simple as possible," and put together a [one-page proposal](#) (pdf).

Of course, some left-leaning commentators aren't happy with the plans being offered. The Washington Post's [Ezra Klein](#) critiques a [health overhaul plan](#) from Rep. Tom Pri Ga., saying, "Price isn't learning from past policy mistakes, and so he means to repeat them."



Cato's Michael Cannon points out one Republican tactic he dislikes, exemplified by recent statements from former Speaker Newt Gingrich. Cannon writes, "Conservatives and Republicans need a better way to talk about cost-containment than the typical anti-comparative-effectiveness-research argument." Cannon argues that what Republicans truly oppose is government rationing of health services and says, "Gingrich should have ... [attacked government rationing](#) head-on. Instead, he portrays information (!) as a dark and sinister force." (Graphic from a report by Cannon)

When you hear the name "Betsy McCaughey," you might not think immediately think of [The New Republic](#). But the controversial, conservative former New York lieutenant governor has stirred up a lot of chatter this week.

McCaughey, who penned an [influential article](#) in 1994 critiquing the Clinton health plan for [The New Republic](#), has attracted renewed attention for her controversial op-eds on current health overhaul efforts.

The chatter began with the [New Republic's blistering profile](#) (by Michelle Cottle) that features, among other anecdotes, staid Brookings economist Henry Aaron presenting "an excruciating quote—McCaughey's reputation as among the most irresponsible, dishonest, and destructive players on the public stage."

The profile's timing is serendipitous — a debate was scheduled Monday night between McCaughey and Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y. and hosted by Politico's [Ben Smith](#). [Smith](#) notes after the debate, "[I] couldn't help being struck by the difference in the reception to her 1994 [New Republic](#) article, which won her a National Magazine Award, despite House fury, and the frontal assault on her this year."

Finally [Andrew Sullivan](#), who was TNR's editor at the time, weighs in with a mea culpa ("its premise that these potential consequences were indisputably in the bill in that kir detail was simply wrong") for McCaughey's original article today, with one caveat:

Again, I take responsibility. I was the editor; I threatened to quit on another occasion; it was my call; and I took credit for its impact; and did not criticize her (and praised her tenacity) subsequently. No one else is responsible. In retrospect, it was not my finest hour.

But look: it was one piece in a magazine. It's being treated as if it were a turning point in history. Please. There's one reason the Clinton healthcare bill failed and it isn't Betsy McCaughey. It's Hillary Clinton.

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And finally, [Wonk Room's Igor Volkov](#) blogs another heated debate between McCaughey and Weiner on MSNBC Tuesday morning. One fiery exchange:

"Anthony, you are ignorant about health insurance," she said, before insisting that "this will go down in history as one of the most browbeating interviews in television history. I hope that it does," Ratigan replied. "And maybe you'll learn at that point then to answer questions as opposed to go on television and cast accusations."

Tags: [comparative effectiveness](#), [gop](#), [mccaughey](#), [rationing](#)

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