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ABC Airs Fantasy About Impact of House Health Care Bill

By Julia A. Seymour

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Perhaps it was an early Christmas wish [1], but "Good Morning America" anchor Diane Sawyer and chief medical editor Tim Johnson shared some overly optimistic thoughts about the health care bill that narrowly passed the House of Representatives Nov. 7.

Sawyer kicked off the one-sided conversation with Johnson by asking him, "Well, if the president gets his wish and a bill either by the end of the year or the beginning of next year we had a simple question: What changes first in the lives of ordinary Americans?"



Sawyer's timetable is purely imaginary. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said on Nov. 8 that the bill is "dead on arrival to the Senate [2]." Graham elaborated saying, "I hope and pray it doesn't [pass] because it would be a disaster for the economy and health care."

But Johnson was game, and launched into a fantasy list of the wonderful things the bill would do starting Jan. 1, 2010, such as begin to curb insurance companies' ability to limit pre-existing conditions, start closing the Medicare donut-hole and allow children to remain on parents' insurance policies until age 27.

He called restraints on pre-existing conditions "a step in the right direction" and longer time children can be insured by parents as "a big advance."

Sawyer and Johnson were so excited about the prospect of the bill becoming law they shrugged off the insurance mandates, mentioned no costs to individuals or businesses and included absolutely no criticism of the bill in their segment.

The House bill includes both individual mandates for health insurance and employer mandates. According to Cato Institute's Michael Cannon, the individual mandate "could require nearly 100 million Americans to switch to a more expensive health plan." [3]

As for the employer mandate, it would require employers "with annual payrolls of \$500,000 or more to provide health insurance to their employees or pay a payroll tax of up to 8 percent," according to the Washington Business Journal. And even employers who offer insurance may be

taxed.

The National Federation of Independent Businesses Tax Counsel Bill Rys called it "a direct tax on jobs." [4]

But that's all years away. Sawyer was concerned about the goodies people would see immediately. "But the big changes, the mandates kicking in that would be later on?"

"All the stuff Jonathan [Karl] talked about - the mandates, the insurance exchange, the public option, if it survives in the Senate, all those truly major rock-bottom changes - we got about 3 years before they're out," Johnson replied.

Sawyer even ended the segment wistfully saying, "Well, at least we can fathom the first year after a bill is passed."

Johnson has a long history of supporting government-run health care solutions and his 2009 push for ObamaCare was not an exception. He has called the lack of "universal coverage" a "national shame," and in the 1990s he told "20/20" viewers that "the Clintons are almost heroes" for their attempt to socialize health care.

The Business & Media Institute's Special Report UnCritical Condition [5] graded ABC as the worst of three networks when it came to health care coverage between Obama's inauguration and June 24, 2009 in large part due to Johnson's blatant advocacy of socialized medicine.

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