State Committee

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1) State GOP looks forward to 2010

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reports on the PA GOP's prospects for 2010.

"…Mr. Gleason pointed to the recent statewide judicial elections as an omen of GOP prospects in 2010. Reversing the pattern of 2008, Republican areas consistently produced higher turnouts than Democratic areas, propelling the GOP candidates to victory in six of the seven contested seats…"

"Democrats and Republicans are laying the groundwork for next year's state House races, contests that could shift the state's political balance through the next Harrisburg administration and, at the congressional level, for the next decade.

Republicans have been in the minority in the House since 2006, but political history and state and national polling results give them hope of recapturing the Speaker's gavel and potentially a chance to control redistricting.

"I'm convinced that we have a strong opportunity of taking back the majority," said Rep. Mike Turzai, Bradford Woods, the Republican whip, as he cited a handful of House seat targets that ould reverse the Democrats' slim 103-99 advantage."

2) Back Channels: Time to stop and determine the true cost of health plan

A *Philadelphia Inquirer* columnist comments on what the Democrat's health care plan would actually cost.

"The bizarre comments last week likening opponents of health-care reform to slavery advocates are understandable in at least one respect.

The speaker, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.), wants to avoid discussing the true costs of reform, which will easily exceed the Democrats' 10-year, $1 trillion estimate.

The real cost for Reid's plan to cover about 30 million more Americans is between $2.5 trillion and $6 trillion. (The latter estimate is from Michael F. Cannon of the Cato Institute; see the math below.) That's not just a Cadillac plan. That's Elvis Presley giving away a gold-plated Cadillac to his buds (constituents) because he doesn't know what else to do with all that money.

President Obama and his fellow Democrats don't quite have all that money – yet – but they know where to get it.

From you.

From state taxpayers (also you).

From federal taxpayers (hmmm, you again)."

3) A Savings Mirage on Health Care

Robert Samuelson of *the Washington Post* writes for *Real Clear Politics* about the real costs of the Democrat's health care plan.

"…Who's right? Let's start with the numbers. Unfortunately, the word "savings" is used misleadingly. It doesn't mean (as is usual) actual reductions; it signifies smaller future increases. There's a big difference…"

"We are now witnessing a determined counterattack by the Obama administration and its political allies on the matter of health care costs. Many critics (including me) have argued that President Obama's "reform" agenda wouldn't control rapidly rising health spending and might speed it up. The logic is simple. People with insurance use more health services than those without. If government insures 30 million or more Americans, health spending will rise. Greater demand will press on limited supply; prices will increase. The best policy: Control spending first; then expand coverage."

4) From Awful to Worse

The Weekly Standard reports on the absolutely 'awful' results as Senate Democrat's attempt to swindle 60 votes for health care.

"The Obama administration and congressional Democrats long ago gave up any pretense of working to rationally reform American health care. The exercise now underway in the Senate is a mad dash to get to 60 votes, and nothing more. That's why some Democratic senators who had no idea exactly what is in the "breakthrough deal" announced by majority leader Harry Reid last week immediately hailed it as a milestone. They're for anything that creates a sense of "momentum" and "inevitability."

But the substance does matter. If Congress passes something in the end, ordinary Americans know they will have to live with it. And from those voters' points of view the latest effort to strike a compromise among Senate Democrats would, based on press reports of what it involves, take the horrendous bill offered by Reid earlier this month and make it even worse."

5) The 'Cost Control' Bill of Goods

The Wall Street Journal also examines the high cost of Obamacare.

"…They might have piped up earlier: What they're finally admitting is that all the grandiose talk about "bending the curve" used for months to sell ObamaCare really comes down to their hope that bureaucratic improvisation will make a difference over the long term. Yet the liabilities of the greatest social spending program in American history will be added to the budget almost immediately, and what happens if Mr. Orszag's technocratic revolution doesn't work as promised? Or rather, when it doesn't? …"

"ObamaCare's core promise—better quality care for everyone at lower costs—is being exposed as an illusion as it degenerates into the raw exercise of political power. Naturally, the White House and its media booster club are working furiously to prop up this fiasco, especially on cost control.

As Obama budget director Peter Orszag put it at a revealing media breakfast earlier this month, the Senate bill does everything the experts recommend to "get at the underlying drivers of health-care costs." While he admitted that "we don't know enough" to produce results right away, the key is to encourage "continuous improvement" through pilot programs and demonstration projects. Cost containment will actually take "years to decades," Mr. Orszag conceded."

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