

Check out the new

## Health Care Arena

An ongoing discussion on the health care debate

Mar. 29, 2010

### Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [Fred Barbash](#)

## Is the White House right to presume that the president now has a stronger hand to play with Congress?

See "[President Obama plans strong hand with Congress](#)" by Mike Allen and "[Barack Obama gains steam, plows ahead](#)" by Carol Lee

Share this



Print

Email



### Roger Pilon

Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Podhoretz on Palin

To complete Norman Podhoretz's thought in this morning's [Wall Street Journal](#), "I knew Ron Reagan. Ron Reagan was a friend of mine. Governor Palin, you're no Ron Reagan -- but I like you all the same." And that distinguishes Podhoretz from those "conservative intellectuals" whose antipathy to Sarah Palin and "the loathsome Tea Party rabble" is ultimately explained, he believes, by "the same species of class bias that Mrs. Palin provokes in her enemies and her admirers."

To be sure, that "class bias" explains a good measure of the hostility Mrs. Palin has faced, especially among that often diverse band called neoconservatives. For like their counterparts on the left, most neoconservatives find their roots in progressivism, not in limited government classical liberalism, and hence in the idea that society should be "run" by elites trained at the "best schools" -- the difference being that in engineering society the neoconservatives march to different drummers than modern liberals. Both camps have greater faith in government than

does "the common man," who is distrusted by both camps (not always without reason), although Podhoretz seems more trustful than most in his band.

Where he errs, I believe, is in his too breezy comparison of Palin to Reagan. There are similarities of course -- especially in the reactions of elites to both, on which his essay dwells -- the most important of which is that both show a certain common sense approach to the world and to public affairs. Their intuitions seem sound, that is. But it takes more than sound intuition to be a successful president. Ronald Reagan was always underestimated. Unlike so many of his elite critics, left and right, he came from humble beginnings, but he was an autodidact his whole life. He read and understood economists, political theorists, historians, and biographers. That knowledge, coupled with a wealth of experience, including two successful terms as governor of the nation's largest state, distinguishes him from Mrs. Palin. Both have that common sense that enables them to speak to "the common man," but the similarity ends there.

Perhaps Mrs. Palin will find the life she has carved out since leaving the governorship of Alaska will be attractive enough to encourage her to continue in it. My sense, however, is that the millions of Americans who today are deeply troubled by the direction the country is taking under the Obama administration are still looking for candidates who combine the understanding, the common sense, and the humility that Ronald Reagan so clearly embodied.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Date</b>
<a href="#">President Obama's Afghanistan trip</a>	Mar. 27, 2010
<a href="#">Do Democrats have legitimate gripes about GOP rhetoric they claim is "fanning the flames" of anger?</a>	Mar. 26, 2010
<a href="#">Health care finale</a>	Mar. 25, 2010
<a href="#">State AGs' lawsuit against health care</a>	Mar. 24, 2010
<a href="#">Political mob rule? Plus, the Obama-Bibi talks and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations</a>	Mar. 23, 2010
<a href="#">HEALTH CARE PASSES Now for the hard sell</a>	Mar. 21, 2010
<a href="#">The road to 216 Slaughter Solution a no-go; Pelosi shoots down abortion vote</a>	Mar. 20, 2010

© 2010 Capitol News Company LLC

Please read our Privacy Policy. By using this site, you accept our Terms of Service.